# ACCESS & PARTICIPATION PLAN

**2025-26 to 2028-29**

Provider name: The Royal Agricultural University
UKPRN: 10005545

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## 1. Introduction and strategic aim

The Royal Agricultural University (RAU) is a world leading, specialist institution located in Cirencester (Gloucestershire). Since its inception in 1845 as the first agricultural college in the English-speaking world, and gaining University status in 2013, the RAU has been dedicated to developing leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators. Established during a period of burgeoning industrialisation and the Great Famine in Ireland, our founders recognised the necessity of transforming UK agriculture through education, science, and innovation to enhance food production.

Today, our mission reflects this founding vision, equipping a new generation of graduates to address contemporary global challenges such as climate change, food security, sustainable land use, biodiversity loss, and heritage management. Recent events, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, climate change concerns, and the weaponisation of food supplies in the Ukraine conflict, underscore the critical importance of our work in preparing future leaders to devise innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to these pressing issues. Our purpose is more vital than ever – 'to care for the land' – enabling communities locally, nationally, and globally to thrive in harmony with nature, to meet the most pressing challenges in the world today, such as climate change, food security, sustainable land use, biodiversity loss and heritage management.

Our Access and Participation Plan (APP) 25-26 to 28-29 outlines our commitment to ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, can access, succeed in, and benefit from higher education, leading to successful employment or further study post-graduation. Reviewed every four years, our APP adapts to address current challenges and barriers faced by our students. As a specialised institution with around 1100 students, we maintain a diverse postgraduate community (approximately 10%) but face challenges in diversifying our undergraduate population, traditionally drawn from less diverse rural English communities. Although widening participation has been a focus for the RAU for several years, given this recruitment context, this issue continues to be a challenge for ourselves and the wider land-based sector.

Our multifaceted approach to widening participation includes an ambitious outreach programme and the expansion of our curriculum to include more science-based and business-related subjects. These efforts have increased the proportion of students from state schools and lower socio-economic groups (SEG).

These goals and measures of success are:

**Quality**: A global reputation for excellence and leadership across our teaching, research and engagement.

**Reach:** A growing, diverse and inclusive community of students and partners in the UK and internationally.

**Sustainability:** A showcase for sustainable and resilient management, through our land and estate, our finances, and our culture.

Our vision is to be the UK's global university for sustainable farming and land management, fostering thriving communities locally, nationally, and globally in harmony with nature. We will achieve this vision by focusing on quality, reach, and sustainability in all our endeavours.

We are a proud TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) Silver Award holder and gained the joint-highest aggregate score for the STEM cluster in KEF (Knowledge Exchange Framework). In our REF2021 results (latest assessment) the RAU is proud to show that 52% of our research is assessed as world-leading or internationally excellent. Due for completion in 2025, is the RAU's new science laboratory, with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment. Together, we will ensure all student groups are supported to access higher education, succeed at the RAU and achieve great honours, and secure good employment or further study outcomes, no matter their background. We are the proud and only University to offer the prestigious Kaleb Cooper bursary, helping prospective applicants from non-agricultural backgrounds.

**We very much look forward to welcoming you in the future and helping you succeed.**

## 2. Risks to equality of opportunity – Royal Agricultural University Risk Profile

To build and maintain a strong plan, we have consulted widely with staff and students to ensure our plan is optimised and best able to address the unique learning environment as a specialist provider. We subsequently aligned these risks to the national Equality of Opportunity Risk Register and identified the following risks that are directly addressed in our Access and Participation Plan.

*The RAU is the smallest public university in the UK with a diverse community* of approximately 1,100 students, comprising an average number of 732 undergraduate students for the four-year period under consideration. As might be expected, most students come from rural areas across the UK and are also geographically diverse from 43 countries around the world, especially on postgraduate programmes.

Since 2016-17, the proportion of mature students has risen from 16% to 31%. During the four years under review, 54.9% were female, 45% were male, 0.1% were other. The proportion of students with a disclosed disability was an average of 26.6% and 70.2% of these students, disclosed a learning difficulty such as dyslexia, which is significantly above the higher education (HE) sector average of 17.9%. Integrated foundation years were included on our BSc programmes from 2019, with a high proportion of students in the POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2.

In 2019 and 2020 29% of home undergraduates across Quintiles 1-5 took a Foundation Degree or Foundation Year, increasing to 40% for Quintiles 1 and 2 and 50% for Quintile 1, highlighting their importance for our target group. *Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data below shows typically that undergraduates reside in rented and RAU accommodation; others live with parents.*

| | Provider maintained property ↕ | Private-sector halls ↕ | Parental/guardian home ↕ | Own residence ↕ | Other rented accommodation ↕ | Other ↕ | Not in attendance at the provider ↕ | Not known ↕ | **Total** ↕ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Royal Agricultural University | 360 | 0 | 170 | 70 | 470 | 15 | 0 | 0 | **1,085** |

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Through analysis of the Access and Participation data dashboard, our internal data, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Graduate Outcomes Survey, and the Office for Students' (OfS) Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), the RAU has identified the following indications of risks to equality of opportunity to be addressed in this plan. For a copy of the national equality of opportunity risks, please see Annex A.

The RAU's key indications of risk were mapped against the OfS EORR to help inform the development of the intervention strategies set out in Section 4.

**Access – refers to increasing student numbers / specific student groups commencing university**

**Risk 1:** There is a lower proportion of students at the RAU either from IMD Quintile 1 or IMD Quintile 2. IMD stands for Indices of Multiple Deprivation, which is a measure of relative deprivation for small, fixed geographic areas of England*.  IMD classifies these areas into five quintiles based on relative disadvantage, with Quintile 1 being the most deprived and Quintile 5 being the least deprived.  At the RAU, the data below shows the number of students that come from each IMD Quintile for the last five years:

| | **IMD Quintile** | | | | | | **Total No. of** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Academic Year** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **NA** | **Students** |
| **2019/20** | 15 | 53 | 105 | 103 | 83 | 18 | 377 |
| **2020/21** | 10 | 46 | 119 | 112 | 84 | 25 | 396 |
| **2021/22** | 16 | 39 | 95 | 124 | 99 | 39 | 412 |
| **2022/23** | 7 | 45 | 91 | 82 | 70 | 30 | 325 |
| **2023/24** | 10 | 36 | 75 | 92 | 63 | 21 | 297 |

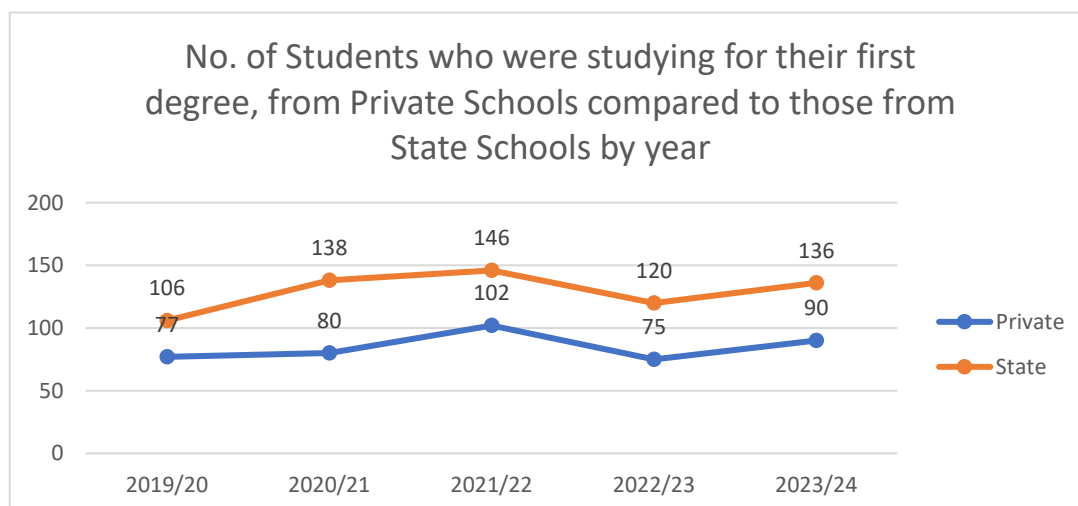*Please note the column shown as NA, are students who are outside of England.*
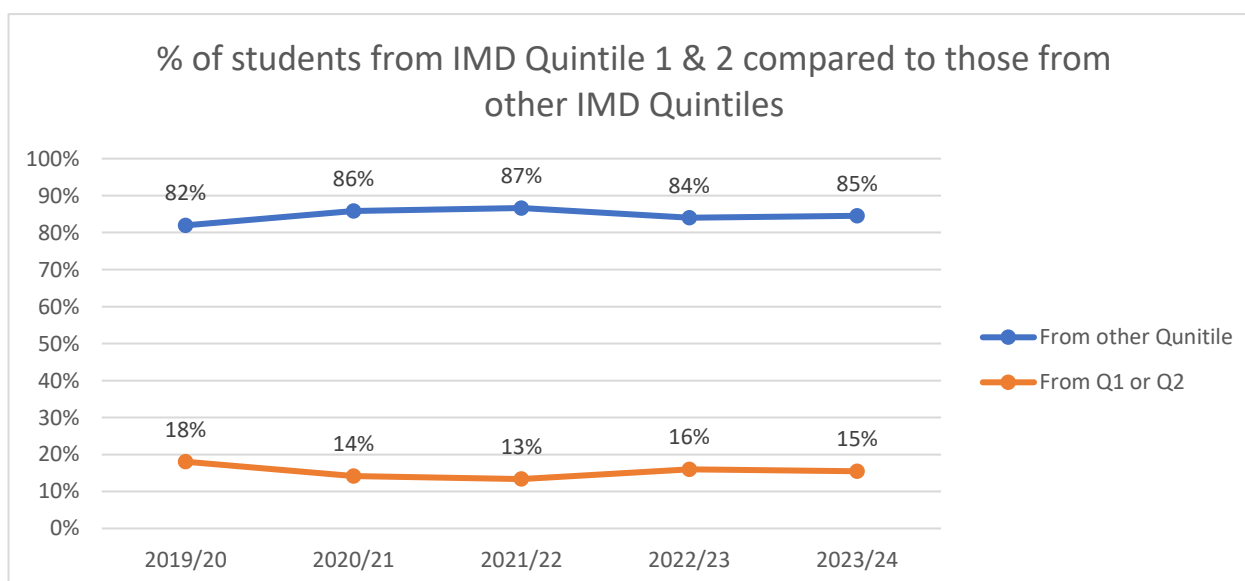


The specialist nature and the heritage of the University, following discussions with our student body, could be part of the reason for this disparity.  As shown above, an average of 15% of our student population come from these areas.

Mapping this risk to the OfS EORR, this relates to Risk 1 – Knowledge and Skills, Risk 2 – Information and Guidance and Risk 3 – Perception of Higher Education, Risk 5 – Limited Choice of Course Type and Delivery Mode, Risk 10 – Cost Pressures, Risk 11 – Capacity Issues.

**Risk 2:** As detailed in Risk 1, there is a pre-conception of the University, heritage as a former independent boys' college, and as an institution, we do receive a large number of students from Independent Schools, compared with the national average.  As a result of the work undertaken as part of our previous APP, we have reduced the gap in more recent years, but we would like to increase the number of students we receive from state schools, which will, in turn, help us to receive more students from a more diverse background, reduce the preconception related to our small specialist University and hopefully increase the number of students from the lower IMD quintiles.  The data below shows the number of students who were studying for their first degree, who came from a private or state school*.

**No. of Students who were studying for their first degree, from Private Schools compared to those from State Schools by year**

| Year | Private | State |
|------|---------|-------|
| 2019/20 | 77 | 106 |
| 2020/21 | 80 | 138 |
| 2021/22 | 102 | 146 |
| 2022/23 | 75 | 120 |
| 2023/24 | 90 | 136 |

*Please note that this does not represent the whole student body for each year. We have excluded the students where this information has not been provided by the student.*

Mapping this risk to the OfS EORR, this risk relates to Risk 1 – Knowledge and Skills, Risk 2 – Information and Guidance, Risk 3 – Perception of Higher Education, Risk 5 – Limited Choice of Course Type and Delivery Mode, Risk 10 – Cost Pressures

This new APP plan demonstrates from our current risk register that underrepresentation in IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 remain the university's biggest overall risks and most significant access risk. Interventions outlined later which in combination help to increase representation in IMD Quintiles 1 & 2 and encourage access to the university from state school pupils, will further support those pupils currently or previously eligible for free school meals. IMD Quintiles are viewed by the university as a more useful measure for the university given it is UK wide unlike TUNDRA which has an England-only focus. Relatedly, our first two objectives specifically target IMD lower quintiles and also increasing state school pupils, which indirectly addresses these concerns.

**Risk 3:**   We have been made aware from the Ministry of Defence that students who are Veterans or from Armed Forces families, could potentially be put at risk of not experiencing equality of opportunity when accessing higher education, we believe that we already do relatively well in recruiting students from this background, on average, 7% of our student population come from this background.  We want to ensure that we at least maintain this average.  The data below shows the student population at the RAU who come from either a military family or are a veteran when they joined the RAU:

| Academic Year | Non-military background | Veteran or from Military Family |
|---|---|---|
| 2019/20 | 91.78% | 8.22% |
| 2020/21 | 93.69% | 6.31% |
| 2021/22 | 92.72% | 7.28% |
| 2022/23 | 93.23% | 6.77% |
| 2023/24 | 92.93% | 7.07% |

Mapping this risk to the OfS EORR, this risk relates to Risk 2 – Information and Guidance, Risk 5 – Limited Choice of Course Type and Delivery Mode.

**Risk 4:** As an international agricultural university, we do have a diverse student body, recruiting from a number of different countries to postgraduate programmes, however, recruitment to the undergraduate land-based programmes in this country, has traditionally come from those who reside within English rural communities which are not diverse. Although widening participation has been a focus for the RAU for a number of years, given this recruitment context, this continues to be a challenge.

The data below shows the percentage of non-white students, compared with white students, over the last five years:
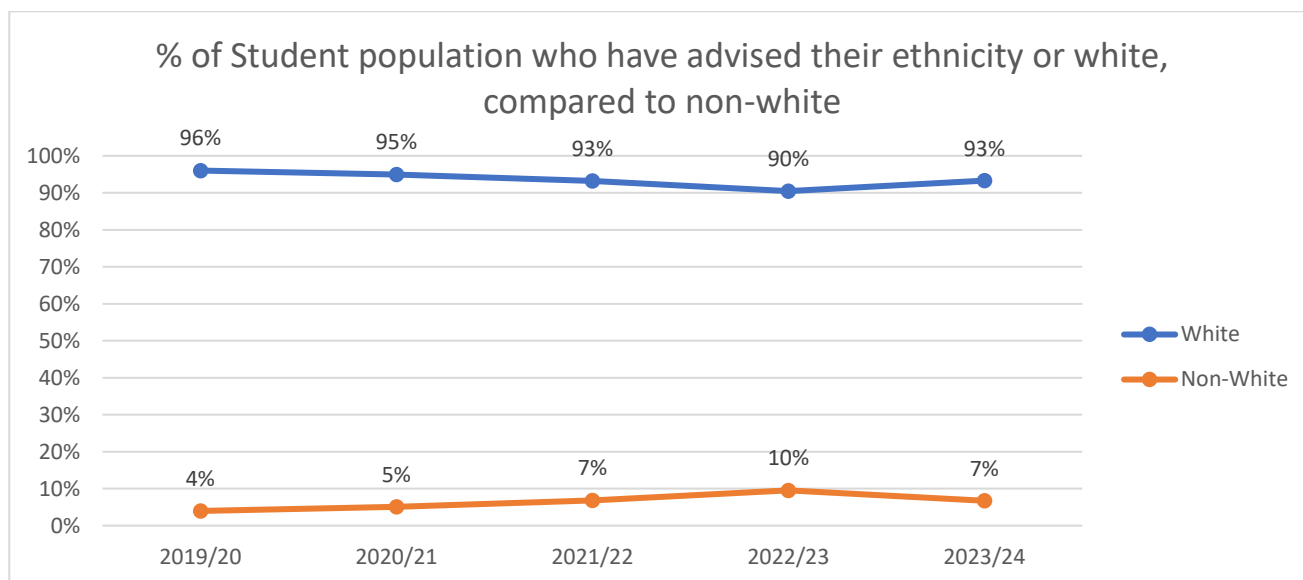


Mapping this risk to the OfS EORR, risk relates to Risk 1 – Knowledge and Skills, Risk 3 – Perception of Higher Education, Risk 5 – Limited Choice of Course Type and Delivery Mode.

**Success – refers to students completing their studies with a 1ˢᵗ Class or 2:1 Degree Outcome**

**Risk 5:** At the RAU, we have a high proportion of students who have disclosed a disability, which has increased significantly over the last five years, our most recent data show nearly 35% of our student population is disabled, which we understand is double the sector average. When monitoring attainment between students who receive 1st Class honours and 2:1 honours, we have noticed that there is a gap between our students that have declared a disability or neurodivergence compared with those students who have not declared a disability or neurodivergence. The data below shows the number and percentage of our disabled students compared with our non-disabled students for the last five years and their attainment for the last four years:

| Academic Year | Mental Health | | Other Disability | | Total Disability | | No Disability | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 2019/20 | 40 | 3.09% | 286 | 22.12% | **326** | **25.21%** | 947 | 73.24% |
| 2020/21 | 39 | 3.02% | 287 | 22.20% | **326** | **25.22%** | 967 | 74.79% |
| 2021/22 | 43 | 3.11% | 303 | 21.89% | **346** | **25%** | 1038 | 75.00% |
| 2022/23 | 88 | 7.19% | 290 | 23.69% | **378** | **30.88%** | 846 | 69.12% |
| 2023/24 | 68 | 6.61% | 290 | 28.18% | **358** | **34.79%** | 671 | 65.21% |

| Academic Year | Disabled % 1st class or 2:1 | No Disability % 1st class or 2:1 | Gap |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2019/20 | 68.89% | 67.95% | -0.94% |
| 2020/21 | 55.41% | 69.19% | 13.79% |
| 2021/22 | 53.85% | 72.55% | 18.70% |
| 2022/23 | 69.86% | 80.54% | 10.67% |

Mapping this risk to the OfS EORR, this risk relates to Risk 6 – Insufficient Academic Support, Risk 7 – Insufficient Personal Support, Risk 8 – Mental Health, Risk 9 – Ongoing impacts of coronavirus and Risk 12 – Progression from Higher Education.

**Progression – refers to students progressing to professional / highly skilled employment or further study**

**Risk 6:** Due to our high proportion of students who have a disability, this issue could potentially affect our student's progression when they leave the RAU. Please see below data from the HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey.  We have reviewed the number and percentage of students who have gone into full-time employment or part-time or full-time further study, the results don't show a huge gap currently, but with the rise in disabled students increasing significantly over the last two years, there is a risk that this gap could grow further.

| Academic Year | % In Full-Time Employment or Part-Time or Full-Time Further Study | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Disabled (from total known outcomes) | Non-Disabled (from total known outcomes) | Gap |
| 2019/20 | 70% | 80% | 10% |
| 2020/21 | 80% | 76% | -4% |
| 2021/22 | 93% | 90% | -3% |

Mapping this risk to the OfS EORR, this risk relates to Risk 1 – Knowledge and Skills, Risk 5 – Limited Choice of Course Type and Delivery Mode, Risk 6 – Insufficient Academic Support, Risk 7 – Insufficient Personal Support, Risk 8 - Mental Health, Risk 9 – Ongoing impacts of coronavirus, Risk 12 – Progression from Higher Education.

### 3. Objectives

Our on-going risk register of student equality and opportunity is addressed by the following six objectives.

**ACCESS / RAISING ATTAINMENT OBJECTIVES – relate to increasing student numbers / specific student groups commencing university**

1. Increase the number and proportion of students entering the University from low-participation neighbourhoods (IMD – Indices of Multiple Deprivation) Quintile 1 and 2. Baseline: 15%.

   | YEAR | Target |
   |------|--------|
   | 24/25 | Minimum of 15% or 50 IMD 1 & 2 Level 4 students |
   | 25/26 | Minimum of 16% or 55 IMD 1 & 2 Level 4 students |
   | 26/27 | Minimum of 17% or 60 IMD 1 & 2 Level 4 students |
   | 27/28 | Minimum of 18% or 70 IMD 1 & 2 Level 4 students |
   | 28/29 | Minimum of 20% or 70 IMD 1 & 2 Level 4 students |

   Alignment to EORR #1 #3, #4, #11.

2. Increase the number and proportion of students entering the University from state run schools and colleges. Baseline: 65%.

   | YEAR | Target |
   |------|--------|
   | 24/25 | 67% of Level 4 UK cohort from state schools |
   | 25/26 | 70% of Level 4 UK cohort form state schools |
   | 26/27 | 70% of Level 4 UK cohort from state schools |
   | 27/28 | 72% of Level 4 UK cohort from state schools |
   | 28/29 | 75% of Level 4 UK cohort from state schools |

   Alignment to EORR #1, #2, #3, #10.

3. Maintain the number and proportion of students entering the University from an armed forces background or family, whilst growing our overall student population. Baseline: 7%.

   | YEAR | Target |
   |------|--------|
   | 24/25 | 7% whilst increasing overall student numbers |
   | 25/26 | 7% whilst increasing overall student numbers |
   | 26/27 | 7% whilst increasing overall student numbers |
   | 27/28 | 7% whilst increasing overall student numbers |
   | 28/29 | 7% whilst increasing overall student numbers |

   Alignment to EORR #1, #3, #10.

4. Increase the number and proportion of students entering the University from a global majority ethnic background. Baseline 6.5%.

   | YEAR | Target |
   |------|--------|
   | 24/25 | Minimum of 7% Level 4 students from ethnic minorities |
   | 25/26 | Minimum of 8% Level 4 students from ethnic minorities |
   | 26/27 | Minimum of 9% Level 4 students from ethnic minorities |
   | 27/28 | Minimum of 10% Level 4 students from ethnic minorities |
   | 28/29 | Minimum of 11% Level 4 students from ethnic minorities |

   Alignment to EORR #3, #4, #10.

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**SUCCESS OBJECTIVES – relate to students completing their studies with a 1st Class or 2:1 Degree Outcome**

5. Reduce the degree attainment gap (1$^{st}$ Class and 2:1 Degree's / 60%+) between disabled and non-disabled students. Baseline: 15%.

| YEAR | Target |
|------|--------|
| 24/25 | Attainment gap (2:1 or better) less than 15% for graduates |
| 25/26 | Attainment gap (2:1 or better) less than 14% for graduates |
| 26/27 | Attainment gap (2:1 or better) less than 13% for graduates |
| 27/28 | Attainment gap (2:1 or better) less than 12% for graduates |
| 28/29 | Attainment gap (2:1 or better) less than 10% for graduates |

Alignment to EORR #6, #7, #8, #12

**PROGRESSION OBJECTIVES – Disabled students progress into professional / highly skilled employment or further study 15 months after leaving the Royal Agricultural University.**

6. Improve progression (employability and/or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students. Baseline: 7%.

| YEAR | Target |
|------|--------|
| 24/25 | Gap for employability / Further Study Less than 7% |
| 25/26 | Gap for employability / Further Study Less than 6.5% |
| 26/27 | Gap for employability / Further Study Less than 6% |
| 27/28 | Gap for employability / Further Study Less than 5% |
| 28/29 | Gap for employability / Further Study Less than 4% |

Alignment to EORR #6, #7, #8, #12.

## 4. Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

**4.1 ACCESS and RAISING ATTAINMENT**

*Please note – our specific intervention activities are shown in Annex B.*

The RAU aspires to be the leading small specialist university in the land agri-food and rural enterprise sectors. To that end, our strategic goals include two that are specifically focussed on widening participation to a more diverse student body:

- To grow and diversify our student community by providing an outstanding student experience and excellent employment outcomes.

- Strategic and sustainable partnership working – establishing, enhancing and growing partnerships with land-based colleges and schools will diversify our student community and extend the reach of the learning opportunities we offer.

We are planning to invest circa £700,000 ever year from 2025-26 up to and including 2028-29 when the annual access and participation investment is closer to £800,000 or 24% HFI (higher fee income percentage). A substantial proportion is dedicated to pre-16 access investment (circa £100k) with the remaining £550k+ dedicated to post-16 access. A breakdown of finances can be viewed below in Annex C.

The RAU is a member of the Study Higher and GROWS NCOPs https://www.grows.ac.uk/ which are primarily networks focused on increasing access though outreach activities. Participation in these networks ensures that the RAU can draw from an extensive knowledge base across the sector for undertaking evaluation of access and participation plan programmes.

Our access and raising attainment interventions have been devised using an evidence-based approach. We analysed the gaps and identified where we have successfully made a positive difference during the period of our previous APP to build upon activities and maximise further. These successes are particularly clear when considering trends in the data with regards to increased enrolment from global majority ethnic students and those from state schools.

The data and analysis were shared at a workshop with key academic and professional service staff along with members of the Students' Union. This workshop and subsequent sessions identified interventions which were plotted against the theory of change model, utilising TASO (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education) guidance to ensure effectiveness.

This cross organisation and collaborative approach to devising the access and attainment interventions has; 1) raised awareness of the longitudinal importance of our APP; 2) ensured interventions are pragmatic; 3) captured the student voice and 4) enabled ownership across different areas of the University and Students' Union.

As per section 2, several key objectives which address identified EORR areas have been identified: -

1. Increase the number and proportion of students entering the University from low-participation neighbourhoods (IMD1 and 2).

2. Increase the number and proportion of students entering the University from state run schools and colleges.

3. Maintain the number and proportion of students entering the University from an armed forces background or family.

4. Increase the number and proportion of students entering the University from a global majority ethnic background.

It is evident that all four intervention strategies have a degree of cross over. Consequently, activities to achieve the objectives have been designed to build on and complement each other enabling multiple intervention opportunities to support an individual student through their journey.

Intervention activities to support students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds

The most significant group of students at risk within our EORR analysis are those from IMD1 and 2 areas. In 2023/24 only 15% of our students came from these areas and we believe we can increase this number by focusing on key intervention activities through a targeted outreach programme to both the students and their influencers, supported by strong and inclusive marketing and financial support packages.

Contextualised offers were introduced under our previous Access and Participation Plan and we are now looking to enhance the admissions process further. We will offer all eligible students an informal discussion to explain the approach thereby reducing any poor-quality perceptions that could be linked with the reduced tariff offer.

Our new campus in Swindon is a key to our access and attainment activities as it based in a HE 'cold spot'. Swindon has significantly lower than expected participation in HE given the GCSE results of the area and only 34.4% of the population have a level 4 or higher qualification compared to a national rate of 40.3%. Participation in some Wards in the town is less than 20%. These much lower levels of participation are also linked to measures of deprivation. The RAU is a member of the Swindon Learning Together Partnership network to take aspirations across Swindon. In particular, we are instigating a children's university in Swindon and contributing to discussions for a joined-up HE Offer for Swindon with other UK Universities.

Supporting pre-16 attainment through UniConnect partnerships in both Gloucestershire and Wiltshire are also pivotal, as is wider partnership work with schools and employers. We are proud to offer a unique bursary to encourage access to Higher Education Agricultural degrees via the new and unique Kaleb Cooper Agricultural Bursary, which targets students from non-agricultural backgrounds. We also collaborate with agricultural partners such as the Agricultural Council and LandEX to enhance the quality of our programmes and ensure equality of opportunity.

Activities to support students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds

In addition, we have identified three key student groups at risk, those from a global majority ethic background, state school educated pupils and individuals from an armed forces background/family.

Intervention strategies have been devised, with tailored activities and initiatives.

**Intervention Strategy 1: IMD Q1 & 2**

**Objectives and targets**

Support disadvantaged and underrepresented students, both locally and nationally, to raise access, interest and recruitment levels, with a particular focus on our specialist courses in agriculture and land management, thereby increasing the number and proportion of students entering the University from low-participation neighbourhoods (IMD 1 &2).

(Targets in Section 3)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 1 – Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

**Related objectives and targets**

All four of the access and attainment objectives and targets are interrelated to some extent and complement each other for maximum impact.

**Related risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 2 – Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy**

As the most significant risk area to the RAU, the interventions and activities are budgeted to cost £341,000. The cost breakdown is shown in our financial summary.

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**

The rationale for this risk and objective is that there is a widening attainment gap for pupils from disadvantaged areas across the sector and the University can play a powerful part, especially linked to its specialist expertise, in redressing some of the balance, both locally and nationally.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation across IS 1 will be a combination of annual evaluation reports, partner evaluations, digital engagement rates, enrolment statistics and qualitative feedback mechanisms.

The four access and attainment intervention strategies will be a standing agenda item at the University's Student Recruitment Committee chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and will also report into the quarterly APP monitoring group chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.

**4.2 Intervention strategy 2: State run schools and colleges (IS 2)**

**Objectives and Targets**

Support students, both locally and nationally, from state schools and colleges, with a particular focus on our specialised courses in agriculture and land management. Thereby increasing the number and proportion of students entering the University from state run schools and colleges.
(Targets in Section 3)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 3 – Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite having the necessary qualifications.

**Related objectives and targets**

All four of the access and attainment objectives and targets are interrelated to some extent and complement each other for maximum impact.

**Related risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 5 – Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy**

As a significant risk area to the RAU, the interventions and activities are budgeted to cost £114,082. The cost breakdown is shown in our financial summary.

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**

The rationale for this risk and objective is to complement IS 1 as students from rural areas, from which the University recruits, tend to also have lower levels of progression to HE, so by targeting state schools and colleges in counties such as Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire the University can make a positive impact through its specialist nature.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation across IS 2 will be a combination of annual evaluation reports, partner evaluations, digital engagement rates, enrolment statistics and qualitative feedback mechanisms.

The four access and attainment intervention strategies will be a standing agenda item at the University's Student Recruitment Committee chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and will also report into the quarterly APP monitoring group chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.

### 4.3 Intervention strategy 3: Armed Forces (IS 3)

**Objectives and targets**

To support learners who may be disadvantaged in accessing higher education due to their previous military service career or from being from an armed forces family. Thereby maintaining the above sector average of the proportion of students entering the University from armed forces backgrounds.

(Targets in Section 3)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 2 -Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make an informed choice about their higher education options.

**Related objectives and targets**

All four of the access and attainment objectives and targets are interrelated to some extent and complement each other for maximum impact.

**Related risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 5 – Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy**

As a smaller risk area to the RAU, the interventions and activities are budgeted to cost £83,248. The cost breakdown is shown in our financial summary.

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**
The OfS announced on 18 January 2024 that those from an armed forces family may have been disadvantaged from accessing higher education due to factors such as having to regularly move school and/or being separated from at least one parent for a period of time. Over recent years we have focused on opening access for families of armed forces personnel with high success rates so we feel it is an area we can maintain, and with further focus, we can make an even more significant impact. We further acknowledge Vice Admiral P J Hally, Chief of Defence People to support applicants from military backgrounds.

**Evaluation**
Evaluation across IS 3 will be a combination of annual evaluation reports, partner evaluations, digital engagement rates, enrolment statistics and qualitative feedback mechanisms.

The four access and attainment intervention strategies will be a standing agenda item at the University's Student Recruitment Committee chaired by a Pro Vice- Chancellor and will also report into the quarterly APP monitoring group chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.

## 4.4 **Intervention strategy 4: Global majority ethnicity (IS 4)**

**Objectives and targets**

To create more ethnically diverse student cohorts by supporting individuals from a global majority ethnic background. Thereby increasing the number and proportion of students entering the University from a diverse range of ethnicities.

(Targets in Section 3)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 3 – Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite having the necessary qualifications.

**Related objectives and targets**

All four of the access and attainment objectives and targets are interrelated to some extent and complement each other for maximum impact.

**Related risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 1 – Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy**

As a significant risk area to the RAU, the interventions and activities are budgeted to cost £136,248. The cost breakdown is shown in our financial summary.

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**
Whilst we have seen a steady and consistent trajectory of increased applications and enrolment from students with a global majority ethnic background the gap is still too high, and we do not want to lose focus and momentum in this area of our access work.

**Evaluation**
Evaluation across IS 4 will be a combination of annual evaluation reports, partner evaluations, digital engagement rates, enrolment statistics and qualitative feedback mechanisms.

The four access and attainment intervention strategies will be a standing agenda item at the University's Student Recruitment Committee chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and will also report into the quarterly APP monitoring group chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.

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**Access Financial Support Summary**

The Royal Agricultural University estimates to invest £111,000 (25-26), which will increase to an estimated £129,000 (28-29), to increase the proportion of students entering the RAU from deprived backgrounds. The funds support access bursaries and unfortunately due to financial challenges, we have not allocated any specific funds towards fee waivers or hardship funds.

Outreach activity will target state schools in the bottom two quintiles of IMD to whom we can guarantee the IMD bursaries. There is no upper limit to the funds i.e., it's not capped. If there a more eligible students, they will all receive the award even if it takes us above budget.

This is provided through a range of bursaries which support admission and travel for those students most in need. Bursaries are as follows:

The university offers many forms of financial support to prospective undergraduate students. There are two forms of key bursaries – stream 1 and stream 2. Stream 1 and 2 bursary eligibilities shown below will be part of a continued review as part of the APP process within the university – and adjusted as needed to meet our APP targets.

The RAU Bursary (Stream 1) offers financial help to eligible undergraduate students for the duration of studies.

Full-time students will receive £1,000 for each year of undergraduate study up to a maximum of £3,000. Part-time payments are pro rata. Bursary is payable in three instalments each year in autumn, spring and summer. Students awarded a RAU Bursary (Stream 1) are not exempt from applying for an additional award

Eligibility: Be a UK student, resident in England or Wales and entering into your first year of undergraduate or foundation degree course. Be entitled to funding for fees and living costs from Student Finance England and have taken out the full loan for 2024/25. Have a household income of £25,000 or less, as assessed by Student Finance England.

The RAU Bursary (Stream 2) offers financial help to eligible undergraduate students for the duration of studies.

Full-time students will receive £3,500 for each year of undergraduate study up to a maximum of £10,500. Part-time payments are pro rata. Bursary is payable in three instalments each year in autumn, spring and summer. Students awarded a RAU Bursary (Stream 2) are not exempted from applying for an additional award

Eligibility: Be a UK student, resident in England or Wales and entering into your first year of undergraduate or foundation degree course. Be entitled to funding for fees and living costs from the relevant Student Finance body and have taken out the full loan. Have a household income of £42,875 or less as assessed by the relevant Student Finance body. Students must also meet the following: IMD Quintile 1 and 2 – for 2025 entry, as we move away from the previous targeted intervention of POLAR4.

**4.5 Success and Progression**

Our success interventions have been devised using an evidence-based approach. We analysed the gaps and identified where we have successfully made a positive difference during the period of our previous APP to build upon activities and maximise further. These successes are particularly clear when considering trends in the data with regards to increased improved degree attainment levels between disabled and non-disabled students.

The data and analysis were shared at a workshop with key academic and professional service staff along with members of the Students' Union. This workshop and subsequent sessions identified interventions which were plotted against the theory of change model, utilising TASO (Transforming Access and Student Outcomes) guidance to ensure effectiveness.

This cross organisation and collaborative approach to devising success interventions has:

1) raised awareness of the longitudinal importance of our APP;
2) ensured interventions for our risk areas are pragmatic in order to raise attainment for our disabled students;
3) captured the student voice and
4) enabled ownership across different areas of the University and Students' Union.

As per section 2 a number of key objectives which address identified EORR areas have been identified: -

1. Reduce the degree attainment gap (1st Class and 2:1 Degrees / 60%+) between disabled and non-disabled students.

2. Improve progression (employability and/or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students.

It is evident that the two Success and Progress intervention strategies also have overlapping areas. Consequently, activities to achieve the objectives have been designed to build on each other enabling multiple intervention opportunities to support an individual student through their journey and to achieve successful career outcomes, typically employability and / or further study.

Intervention activities to support students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds

One of the most significant risk areas within our EORR analysis is disabled and neurodivergent students. In terms of proportionality, our student body, as noted earlier, is now represented by over 35% of students who have disclosed a disability, which is double the sector average. There is a degree attainment gap between our disabled and non-disabled student body, although the University has made significant strides to close the gap in our previous Access and Participation Plan. The EORR risks which the following interventions map to include insufficient academic support, insufficient personal support, mental health risk and progression from higher education.

We introduced a range of measures to help reduce our attainment and progression gap. These measures included ensuring we have improved academic and support tutor interventions throughout the student lifecycle, we introduced alternative and inclusive assessment where this was identified appropriate, and have a better resourced careers team to support disabled and neurodivergent students to achieve positive employability outcomes.

Activities to support disabled and neurodivergent students

In addition, students who are neurodivergent – a term describing people who have different strengths and challenges – and students with mental health concerns have been identified as at risk. Our University is committed to supporting disabled and neurodivergent students through a comprehensive approach that addresses various aspects of student life, ensuring accessibility and inclusion in all areas. We provide personalised disability support with tailored reasonable adjustment plans that meet the specific needs of each student. These plans encompass academic adjustments such as exam modifications, alternative assessment needs and adjustments required for lectures, seminars or tutorials. The reasonable adjustment plans are reviewed with students regularly to ensure that our students receive the reasonable adjustments they are entitled to for their teaching and assessments.

We also prioritise enhancing the physical accessibility of our campus. All buildings, classrooms, the library, and recreational facilities are wheelchair accessible and equipped with appropriate signage and assistive technology, including ramps, lifts, automatic doors, and accessible bathrooms. Additionally, we have created quiet study areas and sensory-friendly spaces to benefit students with sensory processing disorders or those who require a low-stimulation environment to focus.

Mental health support is a vital part of our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment for disabled and neurodivergent students. Students can access our mental health services via email, face-to-face meeting or by phone and talk to a trained professional. We offer peer support groups and mentorship programmes to provide disabled and neurodivergent students with a sense of community and belonging, offering opportunities to share experiences and advice. All University staff receive training to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing, promoting a campus culture of inclusion and empathy.

Furthermore, we have implemented robust inclusive policies and practices that promote awareness and understanding of disability and neurodivergence issues. Mandatory training for all University staff and faculty covers disability awareness, inclusive teaching methods, and the importance of creating an accessible learning environment. We host workshops, seminars, and events that highlight the experiences and contributions of disabled individuals, fostering a more inclusive campus culture. By actively involving disabled students in the decision-making process and ensuring their voices are heard, we strive to address their needs effectively and create a truly supportive and inclusive environment.

To further support our disabled and neurodivergent students, we are dedicated to enhancing their graduate employability and helping them secure good jobs. Our career services offer specialised career service and job placement assistance tailored to the unique needs of disabled students. We provide workshops on CV writing, interview techniques, and job search strategies, specifically designed to address potential barriers and highlight the strengths and skills of disabled and neurodivergent students.

We have established partnerships with a range of employers who are committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Through these partnerships, we offer internships, work placements, and networking opportunities that provide practical experience and help build professional connections. Additionally, we organise career fairs and employer presentations that focus on inclusive recruitment practices and the value of a diverse workforce.

Our alumni network plays a crucial role in supporting disabled students' transition from university to employment. Successful alumni with disabilities are invited to share their experiences and insights through mentorship programmes, panel discussions, and networking events. This helps current students gain valuable advice and inspiration from those who have navigated similar challenges.

By integrating these activities into our support framework, we aim to empower disabled students with the skills, experience, and confidence needed to succeed in their careers. Our holistic approach ensures that they not only thrive academically but also enter the job market as competitive and well-prepared candidates.

The University also undertakes a range of activities to help disabled students achieve good degree outcomes and secure graduate jobs in order to provide an inclusive experience of higher education to disabled students. These are some of the activities that the University is already having successes with and will continue to invest in.

- **Mentorship Programmes:** Establish mentorship programmes that connect disabled students with successful alumni or professionals in their field. Mentors can provide guidance, career advice, and networking opportunities (Advance HE (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/new-guidance-disabled-graduate-employment-disabled-students-commission)).

- **Work Experience and Internships:** Encourage and facilitate access to internships, work placements, and part-time job opportunities. This practical experience is crucial for skill development and can significantly improve employment prospects after graduation (Prospects (https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-with-disabilities)).

- **Career Services and Workshops:** Offer tailored career services, including CV writing workshops, interview preparation, and job search strategies specifically designed for disabled students. Ensure these services are easily accessible and inclusive (Prospects (https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-with-disabilities)).

- **Accessible Technology and Resources:** Provide accessible technology and resources, such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and ergonomic tools, to support students in their academic and professional pursuits (Prospects (https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-with-disabilities)).

- **Inclusive Curriculum and Teaching Practices:** Implement inclusive teaching practices and make curricular adjustments to accommodate diverse learning needs. This includes providing lecture notes in various formats and ensuring all course materials are accessible (Advance HE (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-and-views/new-guidance-disabled-graduate-employment-disabled-students-commission))

- **Disability Awareness Training for Staff:** Conduct regular disability awareness training for University staff to ensure they understand the challenges faced by disabled students and can offer appropriate support and accommodations (Prospects (https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-with-disabilities)).

- **Networking Events:** Organise networking events and career fairs that focus on inclusive employers who are committed to recruiting disabled graduates, which can help students build valuable connections in their industry (Prospects (https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-with-disabilities)).

- **Graduate Employment Schemes**: Promote and support participation in graduate employment schemes designed for disabled students, such as the UK's Access to Work scheme, which provides financial support for workplace adjustments (Advance HE (https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/news-

and-views/new-guidance-disabled-graduate-employment-disabled-students-
commission)) (Prospects (https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/employment-levels-among-graduates-
with-disabilities)).

Implementing these activities can create a supportive environment that enhances the academic and professional outcomes for disabled students.

**Intervention Strategy 5: SUCCESS: Students complete their studies with 1<sup>st</sup> Class or 2:1 Degree Outcome**

**Objectives and targets**

To reduce the degree attainment gap (1<sup>st</sup> Class and 2:1 Degrees / 60%) between disabled and non-disabled students.

(Targets in Section 3)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 6: Insufficient academic support – students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.

**Related objectives and targets**

This SUCCESS objective and target is interrelated to our PROGRESSION target and compliments each other, providing for maximum impact. The Royal Agricultural University wants to ensure its disabled and neurodivergent students and / or those students with a mental health concern achieve degree outcomes and career prospects that are comparable with non-disabled students.

**Related risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 7 – insufficient personal support – students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

Risk 8 – Mental Heath – students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

Risk 12 – progression from higher education – students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy**

As a moderate risk area to the RAU, the interventions and activities are budgeted to cost £99,334. The cost breakdown is shown in our financial summary.

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**

The rationale for this risk and objective is that there is a widening attainment gap for disabled and neurodivergent students, although this gap has reduced over the last APP cycle. The University is mindful however that the proportion of disabled or neurodivergent students has significantly increased. Given this growing proportion and increased risk concerning students who have shared a mental health diagnosis with us w, an optimised intervention strategy has been devised.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation across IS 5 will be a combination of annual evaluation reports, exam board feedback, review of academic and pastoral support arrangements, and frequent feedback through university committees and the Students' Union.

The two progression and success access intervention strategies will be a standing agenda item at the University's Student Recruitment Committee chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and will also report into the quarterly APP monitoring group chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.

**4.6 Intervention Strategy 6: PROGRESSION: Disabled Graduates progress into professional / highly skilled employment or further study 15 months after leaving the Royal Agricultural University.**

**Objectives and targets**

Improve progression (employability and / or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students.

(Targets in Section 3)

**Risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 6: Insufficient academic support – students may not receive sufficient personalised professional support to achieve a positive outcome.

**Related objectives and targets**

This SUCCESS objective and target is interrelated to our PROGRESSION target and compliments each other, providing for maximum impact. The Royal Agricultural University wants to ensure its disabled students and / or those students with a mental health concern achieve degree outcomes and career prospects that are comparable to non-disabled or neurodivergent students.

**Related risks to equality of opportunity**

Risk 7 – Insufficient personal support – students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

Risk 8 – Mental Heath – students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

Risk 12 – Progression from higher education – students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

**Total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy**

As a smaller risk area to the RAU, the interventions and activities are budgeted to cost £68,917. The cost breakdown is shown in our financial summary.

**Summary of evidence base and rationale**

The rationale for this risk and objective is that there is a widening attainment gap for students with disability and or neurodivergence, although this gap has reduced over the last APP cycle. The University is mindful however that the proportion of students with a disability and or those students who are neurodiverse has significantly increased. Given this growing proportion and increased risk concerning students with mental health and disabilities, an optimised intervention strategy has been devised.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation across IS 5 will be a combination of annual evaluation reports, exam board feedback, review of academic and pastoral support arrangements, and frequently feedback through university committees and the Students' Union.

The two progression and success access intervention strategies will be a standing agenda item at the University's Student Recruitment Committee chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and will also report into the quarterly APP monitoring group chaired by the Director of Strategic Planning and Governance.

## 5.  Whole provider approach

We are committed to a whole provider approach, to ensure successful delivery of the intervention, strategies outlined above. The RAU core values - Collaboration, Inclusivity, Open-mindedness, Resourcefulness and Responsibility – are incorporated into our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2021 – 2025). Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (2021 – 2025) sets out our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and drives EDI to meet our responsibility to equality of opportunity and our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The Strategy seeks to demonstrate our commitment to work together to create a university community where diversity is recognised, valued and celebrated.

We seek to proactively advance equality and inclusive practice in our staff and student recruitment and admissions processes, in our research activity, in our teaching, within the campus environment and in the experiences, we offer to our academic and professional services and the student community. We are seeking to develop a culture which values, respects and celebrates diversity, making it a place where people want to work and study because they know that we take a pro-active approach to advancing equality. Our strategic objectives are to:

- Embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into all aspects of university life.
- Review and revise the RAU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Governance structure.
- Attract, retain, develop and support a diverse staff and student population; and
- Use robust, reliable Equalities Data to target activities.

At the RAU, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and supported by the Director of Human Resources (HR), with a membership from the Students' Union (SU) and 'EDI champions' from across all academic and professional services departments. Although the Vice-Chancellor and Director of Human Resources take overall responsibility for equality of opportunity and our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, it is fully acknowledged that all RAU colleagues are responsible collectively for addressing the risks to equality of opportunity and how we pay due regard to our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

This responsibility is regularly communicated via All Staff Meetings and via annual mandatory EDI training organised by HR. All managers are responsible for ensuring that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is implemented and maintained within their area of responsibility, confirming all staff are fully informed about their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying them out. Managers are responsible for taking appropriate action if they are aware of any acts of discrimination within their areas of responsibility, with support available from Human Resources. The SU also understands this responsibility and revised its structure to create a new SU Welfare and Diversity Officer role from 2022-23.

We have a strong approach to the monitoring and evaluation of our plan via the introduction of an Institutional Planning and Governance (IPG) team in the 2021-22 academic year. The IPG team supports and develops our university community to enable us to deliver effective activities in support of this plan, commensurate with the APP aims, objectives, targets and requirements. The strategic direction of this plan is the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor, supported by the Director of the Institutional Planning and Governance (IPG) and the IPG team.

IPG colleagues are members of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group, which has overall responsibility for agreeing the content of our APP. Our APP requires approval from our accountable officer, the Vice-Chancellor. Operational oversight of the APP is provided by the APP steering group and is chaired by the IPG. The APP steering group has senior representatives from across the University including academic senior leadership, professional services senior leadership and Students' Union senior leadership.

The APP targets and priorities relating to Access are led by the Director of External Relations, supported by the student recruitment and outreach team, other senior professional services leaders and senior academic

leaders. As a small and specialist university with limited resource, we are focussing our outreach activities in those areas where we can make the biggest difference. We are specifically focussing on rural areas of deprivation in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, where we have strong connections with groups. Regarding success and participation, the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) has embedded EDI across the curriculum via a focus on EDI in curriculum design and curriculum planning, as well as via continuing professional development for academics and EDI celebrations for students.

EDI curriculum mapping is underpinned by the nine Protected Characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, as well as decolonisation of the curriculum and the promotion of social justice and mobility, at the point of programme re/validation. Furthermore, our Head of Student Services is a specialist in supporting students with disabilities and learning difficulties. Given that 35% of our students have disclosed a disability, much work undertaken by the Student Services team is focused on supporting students with disabilities and ensuring that eligible students access the Disabled Students' Allowance, to facilitate students' continued success and participation.

The Student Services team also raises awareness of key dates in the EDI calendar and runs campaigns to support students and raise awareness. The Employability and Enterprise team will also further support students' success and participation via interventions aligned with student progression.

### 6. Student consultation

We are fully committed to engaging with and consulting our students and the RAU and RAU Students' Union have a strong working relationship of collaboration and partnership. The student body is represented throughout all levels of the University. There have been significant developments in student consultation at a University and SU level, which include replacing the former Student Experience Committee with two new University committees: a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee; and a Student Wellbeing and Community Committee. The creation of these two committees have allowed us to engage with and consult students in a more strategic manner and enables greater strategic time to be allocated to student consultation regarding different aspects of which the student experience is important to students. Changes in the SU structure has also improved student engagement and consultation. The SU structure now comprises a President; Vice President Learning; and a Vice President Leisure, in addition to a Welfare and Diversity Officer; International Officer; Sports and Societies Officer; RAG Chair; and RAG Secretary.

SU leaders are members of the Governing Council and members of a range of strategic University committees and groups, such as Academic Board; Access and Participation Plan steering group; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee; Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee; and Student Wellbeing and Community Committee; and many of their sub-committees and other working groups and task and finish groups. This engagement and consultation include raising awareness of our access and participation priorities and progress; and enabling SU leaders to contribute to the formation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our plan via the regular APP steering group meetings. This consultation has provided students with the opportunity to engage with issues of equality of opportunity and they have provided a number of suggestions that have contributed to the development of this APP and we have made changes to various key elements of the plan, based on student feedback.

Overall, we have also significantly improved feedback to the student voice in several ways. We have introduced: clear, well-structured 'You said … We did …' feedback templates and examples for Module Leaders to use and complete from mid-module evaluations, which are shared with students and posted onto VLE module pages at the end of each semester; 'You said … We did …' feedback processes from common themes, which are raised in mid-module evaluations within subject areas and shared with students and posted onto VLE pages and screens across campus at the end of each semester; and new end-of-module evaluations for the 2024-25 academic year following student consultation. As a result, we now have an established student voice cycle and an ethos across the institution which actively consults students and encourages student feedback and the implementation of change for continuous improvement wherever practically possible.

We have recently introduced an Institutional Student Satisfaction Survey at programme level to elicit the student voice and is used to inform and improve planning and practices at programme level; and an 'Enhancing the Student Learning Experience and Teaching and Assessment Quality Improvement Plan' to inform and improve planning and practices at programme level using the student voice from the annual National Student Survey. The latter is monitored by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. The Academic Quality Office also consults students extensively regarding the development of programmes and asks students to join our revalidation panels. Furthermore, the Vice-Chancellor, Senior Leadership Team meet with the SU monthly to consult students and to hear the student voice, but in practice there is typically much more frequent communication informally with the Students' Union regarding student consultation.

## 7. Evaluation of the plan

To strengthen the evaluation of our APP, the RAU has adopted a comprehensive data-driven approach. We have established clear, measurable objectives aligned with the institution's strategic goals and regulatory requirements. Our objectives encompass a broad spectrum of access and participation metrics, including student recruitment, continuation, academic success, and progression to employment, particularly focusing on underrepresented and disadvantaged groups.

We are provisioning an effective evaluation framework that includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Quantitative data are drawn from academic records, continuation rates, graduation completion rates, and employment statistics, while qualitative data is gathered through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with students, staff, and employers. This mixed-methods approach provides a holistic view of the effectiveness of the APP initiatives and identifies areas for improvement.

Regular monitoring and reporting are crucial components of the RAU's robust evaluation strategy. We are implementing a cyclical review process, with periodic assessments (e.g., annually or biannually) to track progress against the set objectives, which will report into the RAU's Strategic Planning Board. These reviews will involve key stakeholders, including academic staff, support services, and student representatives, to ensure diverse perspectives are considered. Additionally, interim reports can help maintain momentum and make timely adjustments to strategies and interventions.

Benchmarking against peer institutions and national standards will also enhance our evaluation process. By comparing performance with similar specialist and land-based institutions, the RAU will identify best practices and areas where we may have fallen short. This benchmarking has been supplemented with an external review process with periodic updates to our Governing Council to provide an objective assessment of the APP's effectiveness.

Furthermore, the University has fostered a culture of continuous improvement with a particular APP focus, which involves not only assessing outcomes but also analysing the processes and interventions that led to these outcomes. The RAU is willing to experiment with innovative approaches, pilot new initiatives, and refine existing practices based on the evaluation findings. This adaptive approach ensures that our APP remains dynamic and responsive to changing needs and challenges.

In summary, strengthening the evaluation of our Access and Participation Plan requires a systematic, inclusive, and iterative approach. By setting clear objectives, utilising a diverse range of data collection methods, regularly monitoring progress, benchmarking, fostering continuous improvement, and maintaining transparent communication, the RAU can ensure our APP is effective in promoting equity, diversity and inclusivity in higher education.

## 8. Provision of information to students

Our external relations access and outreach team actively engages with local and national schools and colleges to conduct higher education awareness and attainment-raising activities for targeted students. By attending HE Fairs, our team provides detailed, face-to-face information to prospective students and school and college staff. In addition, the RAU hosts an annual Teachers and Advisers Conference, which includes comprehensive sessions on HE finances, tuition fees, scholarships, and bursaries, ensuring educators are well-informed to guide their students.

We deliver information to prospective students through multiple channels, including admissions and support staff, our user-friendly website, open days, school and college visits, and dedicated offer holder days. Enrolled students receive a wealth of information, prominently featured in the Student Handbook, which includes sections on student finance, support services, and handling financial hardship. These resources are designed to ensure students have access to all necessary information to manage their finances effectively.

Student finance support is prominently displayed on the RAU website's homepage, linking to a dedicated section that provides comprehensive details on tuition fees, the student funding system, scholarships, bursaries, and the RAU hardship fund. This vital information is also summarised in the undergraduate prospectus, with accessible links provided. Additionally, a Student Finance England (SFE) video is hosted on our website, offering students a clear understanding of financial arrangements for the upcoming academic year.

Our plan will be published on our website and reviewed throughout each academic year, noting and requesting any relevant amendments to the OfS. The university will disseminate information via the website once the plan is accepted and the university will provide periodic updates on its progress on our website too. During the plan, we aim to visualise any relevant progression data and aspects of the plan. This will be logged on our website and available here:
www.rau.ac.uk/access-agreements-and-access-and-participation-plans

We continually update our resources and conduct feedback surveys to ensure that our financial support services meet the evolving needs of our student body. Through these comprehensive efforts, we aim to empower our students with the knowledge and tools they need to succeed academically and financially.

For student fee information, please see our website: https://www.rau.ac.uk/student-life/finance-scholarships-and-bursaries

## 9. Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

<u>Acknowledging the sector level risks</u>

Many students do not experience equality of opportunity in higher education. This challenge is true across the three main stages of a student's higher education journey: access, participation and progression.

The Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (the EORR) identifies 12 sector-wide risks that may affect a student's opportunity to access and succeed in higher education.

**Risk 1: Knowledge and skills**
Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 2: Information and guidance**
Students may not have equal opportunity to receive the information and guidance that will enable them to develop ambition and expectations, or to make informed choice about their higher education options.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 3: Perception of higher education**
Students may not feel able to apply to higher education, or certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 4: Application success rates**
Students may not be accepted to a higher education course or may not be accepted to certain types of providers within higher education, despite being qualified.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 5: Limited choice of course type and delivery mode**
Students may not have equal opportunity to access a sufficiently wide variety of higher education course types.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 6: Insufficient academic support**
Students may not receive sufficient personalised academic support to achieve a positive outcome.

*Lifecycle stages: On-course, progression*

**Risk 7: Insufficient personal support**
Students may not receive sufficient personalised non-academic support or have sufficient access to extracurricular activities to achieve a positive outcome.

*Lifecycle stages: On-course, progression*

**Risk 8: Mental health**

Students may not experience an environment that is conducive to good mental health and wellbeing.

*Lifecycle stages: On-course, progression*

**Risk 9: Ongoing impacts of coronavirus**

Students may be affected by the ongoing consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 10: Cost pressures**

Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 11: Capacity issues**

Students may not have equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education, such as suitable accommodation.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

**Risk 12: Progression from higher education**

Students may not have equal opportunity to progress to an outcome they consider to be a positive reflection of their higher education experience.

*Lifecycle stages: Access, on-course, progression*

## 10. Annex B: Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan.

**Intervention Strategy 1: IMD Q1 & Q2 (IS 1)**

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access and attainment activities to target those who are socio-economic disadvantaged | 1.1- Targeted curriculum development focused on new courses, level of entry and mode/place of delivery to enable appeal and access. | Academic staff time. | A refreshed portfolio appealing to a wider range of students. | All four access and attainment interventions have a degree of complementary impact. |
| | 1.2 - Awareness and delivery activities at RAU Swindon in addition to the Cirencester campus. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | Annual engagement activity plan for Swindon devised and implemented. | |
| | 1.3 -Evidence led outreach programme student focused:<br>• In school activities<br>• Rural shows and Festivals<br>• On campus activities<br>- Residential programmes | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | Activity plan devised and regularly improved based on feedback and evidence of impact. | |
| | 1.4 -Evidence led outreach programme influencer focused: -<br>• Activities and information for parents / carers<br>• Teachers' networks<br>- Support and information for teachers | Academic and Professional Service staff time, event costs. | Greater range and number of teacher engagements per annum. | |

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1.5 - Partnerships to support attainment and progression – e.g UniConnect (GROWS and Aim Higher); employers and schools. | Academic and Professional Service staff time and event costs. | Range of resources developed to raise attainment to target schools and colleges. | |
| | 1.6 -Subsidised transport to key awareness and engagement events such as Open Days. | Transport costs. | Attendance at events by those for whom the cost of transport would have been a barrier. | |
| | 1.7 - Use of contextualized offers and bursaries through a rounded package of support narrative. | Bursary costs. | Enrolments by those for whom cost of study would have been a barrier | |
| | 1.8 -Targeted marketing using platforms such as UniFrog and the RAU's CRM | Licence and software costs. | Digital engagement uplift form target groups. | |

**Intervention Strategy 2: State run schools and colleges (IS 2)**

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access and attainment activities to target those from state run schools and colleges | 2.1 - Targeted activity both in school and on campus including: -<br><br>- Taster sessions run by both support and academic staff<br>- Masterclasses mapped to the school curriculum<br>- Focus on geography and science subjects<br>- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) support such UCAS process and funding. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | Year on year increases in depth and breadth of educational attainment activities. | All four access and attainment interventions have a degree of complementary impact. |
| | 2.2 -Focused plan for Gloucestershire and Wiltshire based schools and colleges utilizing both the Swindon and Cirencester campuses. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | Range of initiatives in place with clear impact measures. | |
| | 2.3 - Host teachers conference annually. | Event costs. | Positive feedback regarding CPD value from attendees. | |
| | 2.4 - Implement a regular communications and engagement plan for teachers including newsletter, direct mail shots and face:face events. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | Positive and meaningful interactions with teachers. | |
| | 2.5 - Utilise alumni network to profile the University to their previous school or college. | Professional Service staff time. | Outreach programme of activity in place for alumni ambassadors. | |

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**Intervention Strategy 3: Armed forces personnel their families (IS 3)**

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access and attainment activities to target those with an armed forces family background. | 3.1 -Woking with resettlement teams to support transition. | Academic and Professional Service staff time. | A range or resources and activities developed in partnership. | All four access and attainment interventions have a degree of complementary impact. |
| | 3.2 - Continued commitment to the Armed Forces covenant. | Academic and Professional Service staff time. | Ongoing and regular engagement and profiling events. | |
| | 3.3- Work with Veterans Association to raise awareness and facilitate applications. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | A range or resources and activities developed in partnership. | |
| | 3.3 -Explore Accredited Prior Learning (APL) models for veterans. | Academic staff time. | Clear APL admissions process in place and communicated. | |
| | 3.4 -Use of targeted bursaries / scholarships. | Bursary / scholarship costs. | Enrolments by those for whom cost of study would have been a barrier. | |
| | 3.5 -Ensure application process details UCAS points as well as A levels to ensure other qualifications are understood as contributing to tariff access. | Professional Service staff time and marketing materials. | Clear marketing and signposting communications in place. | |
| | 3.6 - Create marketing materials featuring alumni with a military background. | Professional Service staff time and marketing materials. | Case studies created covering different military backgrounds. | |

**Intervention Strategy 4: Global majority ethnicity (IS 4)**

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access and attainment activities to target those with a global majority ethnic background. | 4.1 -Awareness and delivery activities at RAU Swindon in addition to the Cirencester campus | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | Annual engagement activity plan for Swindon and Cirencester devised and implemented with a focus on diversity. | All four access and attainment interventions have a degree of complementary impact. |
| | 4.2 -Use of contextualized offers and bursaries through a rounded package of support narrative. | Professional Service time and bursary costs. | Enrolments by those for whom cost of study and / or grade tariff would have been a barrier. | |
| | 4.3 -Identify and then work with targeted and relevant third sector representation organisations such as the BAME walking group. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, marketing collateral and event costs. | Relationships established and partnership activities with reach implemented. | |
| | 4.4 -Inclusive marketing materials including a focus on alumni role models with an ethnic minority background. | Professional Service staff time and marketing materials. | Case studies created covering ethnically diverse backgrounds. | |

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**Intervention Strategy 5: Reduce the degree attainment gap (1st Class and 2:1 Degree's / 60%+) between disabled and non-disabled students.**

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| To reduce the degree attainment gap (1st Class and 2:1 Degrees) between disabled and non-disabled students | SERVICE INTERVENTIONS – *Internal Actions taken by the RAU to improve the quality of its provision to support disabled students during their RAU degree.*<br><br>5.1 – **Conduct a review of the way student support services are delivered for disabled students and implement changes** to improve the options available for disabled students, with focus to improving degree attainment. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, including reviewing team structure.<br><br>Provide additional training and support for staff to upskill colleagues.<br><br>Reallocate any existing underutilised resources and reallocated to services focused on supporting disabled students including in-course counselling services and support. | Better in course support for disabled students and those who are neurodivergen**t**<br><br>Better informed disabled students with tailored help for Level 4, 5, 6 undergraduates and Level 7 master'**s** students.<br><br>Faster counsellin**g** support with an agreement to provide at least basic support within two weeks of the enquiry made.<br><br>Monitored and tracked student reviews with better CRM systems to capture and update and communicate more effective and efficiently with students. | Progress Objective 6<br><br>University Strategy<br><br>Working with the RAU Students Union |
| | SERVICE INTERVENTIONS –<br><br>5.2 – **Improve Academic Support Sessions** | Module Leaders to offer bespoke academic support sessions to individual disabled students prior to assignment deadlines each semester, with encouragement to disabled students from Student Services team to attend. | In the immediate term, reverse trend and gap in attainment between disabled and non-disabled<br><br>Enhanced academic support to improve disabled students' module attainment and degree (programme) attainment | NSS Enhancement Plan<br><br>TEF Improvement Plan<br><br>University Strategy |

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 5.2 – Improve Academic Support Sessions, continued | Reasonable adjustment plans will capture specific student needs / support.<br><br>Liaise between student services and module leaders regarding reasonable adjustment plans. | The PVC will coordinate new guidelines for module leaders to help academic staff provided more tailored support. This will include additional training for module leaders and embedded relevant sector materials from Advance HE and LandEX. Furthermore, modules will be internally audited to ensure all RAU modules are providing support and make further interventions for any shortfalls or issues which arise. | NSS Enhancement Plan<br><br>TEF Improvement Plan<br><br>University Strategy |
| | SERVICE INTERVENTIONS – <br><br>5.3 – **Dedicated staff to drive student support**, assist RAU academics and monitor progress. | The RAU will hire a Student Success Manager to provide support for disabled students at the RAU.<br><br>Capture relevant data and information about performance of disabled students and record in student records system.<br><br>Liaise with academic and professional services staff to help disabled students, ensuring any attainment gaps identified – relevant interventions are in place to help mitigate.<br><br><br>Mental Health remains embedded throughout all student processes and mental health training for all staff. | Provide frequent reports to academic staff in order to keep them informed in terms of how best to support disabled students.<br><br>Monitor and lead on interventions for disabled students at the RAU.<br><br>Work across all Directorates and Academics to ensure no opportunity to support a disabled student is missed.<br><br>To further support students with neurodivergence's and / or mental health concerns, the Student Success Advisor will help to ensure mental health is embedded throughout the student journey processes. | NSS Enhancement Plan<br><br>TEF Improvement Plan<br><br>University Strategy |

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | STUDENT INTERVENTIONS – *Explicit activities which RAU staff will take to help disabled students obtain improved graduate outcomes.*<br><br>5.4 **Provide an online summer school** to support disabled students carrying resists and deferrals – providing additional academic support. | Academic and Professional Service staff time in order to provide a dedicated timetabled summer school to support any disabled student who requires extra support. Sessions will be typically led by academic subject leaders or staff experts. | Enhance current summer school services to include dedicated disabled student support.<br><br>Enhanced academic support to improve disabled students and module attainment<br><br>Institutional planning to provide data and student insight to track and monitor progress and success<br><br>Academic services to provide enhanced emotional and wellbeing support and ensure all additional pastoral needs are met | TEF Improvement Plan<br><br>University Strategy<br><br>Progress Objective 6 |
| | STUDENT INTERVENTIONS –<br><br>5.5 **Disability assessment and monitoring**. The University to provide greater signposting to mental health and disability services that can help with psychometric assessments for dyslexia and dyspraxia – helping to provide interventions more promptly. | Enhanced partnership working with local service providers for dyslexia assessment.<br><br>Additional training of relevant professional services staff and Deans to provide enhanced support on campus. | Improved outcomes for disabled students and those with neurodivergence through improved testing and assessment during Level 4 and Level 7-degree students.<br><br>More signposting to the DSA – Disabled Student Allowance – and provide further assistance for students wishing to apply to this to help provide additional funding options if DSA funding granted. | TEF Improvement Plan<br><br>University Strategy<br><br>Progress Objective 6 |

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| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | STUDENT INTERVENTIONS – 5.6 The **University will explore providing technology enabled solutions to enhance learning** of disabled students. | Professional Service staff time and Lead Subject Academics / Deans. Enhancing out of hours support in Academic Services to provide student support for students The Learning Technology team will continue to assess the potential for use of AI to support students by providing relevant information to support their query. This would be available both in and out of working hours. | Improved outcomes and satisfaction for disabled students. More efficient solutions and efficiencies to allow more free time to help all students, following process enhancements. Less risk of mental health issues having adverse effects. | Progress Objective 6 University Strategy NSS TEF improvement plan |
| | STUDENT INTERVENTIONS – 5.7 Provide **out of hours cover using software-enabled solutions** will allow students with disabilities and most in need to engage with the University late evenings and most weekends during term time. | The Learning Technology team will continue to assess the potential for use of AI to support students by providing relevant information to support their query. This would be available both in and out of working hours. Professional services colleagues to be trained in new software-enabled solutions to help respond faster and more effectively to disabled students out of hours. | Improved outcomes and satisfaction for disabled students. More efficient solutions and efficiencies to allow more free time to help all students, following process enhancements. Less risk of mental health issues having adverse effects. | Progress Objective 6 University Strategy NSS TEF improvement |

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**Intervention Strategy 6: Disabled Graduates progress into professional / highly skilled employment or further study 15 months after leaving the Royal Agricultural University.**

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve progression (employability and / or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students. | STUDENT INTERVENTIONS – *Explicit activities which RAU staff will take to help disabled students obtain improved graduate outcomes.* 6.1 – **Use new AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools to support disabled graduates with employability**. Use AI to help enhance graduate interview techniques to help build confidence and gain insight into mock performance. System designed to work on mobile phone and tablet devices as well as laptops. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, including undertaking a tender exercise for AI Software from providers such as shortlist.me Dedicated funding to provide additional new AI software to disabled students targeted at Level 6 and Level 7 students and graduates RAU IT integration – support from IT colleagues to embed software services into existing software suite | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students Better prepared and informed for job roles Data to be monitored by Institutional Planning and Academic Services on success outcomes | Success Objective 5 University Strategy Working with the RAU Students' Union |
| | STUDENT INTERVENTIONS – 6.2 - **Provide CV Clinics for disabled students** to help enhance CV and cover letters – including writing and checking support. Build on current provision which provides one to one career meeting(s) for all students, drop-in sessions on a Tuesday, workshops on areas such as CV/letter writing, LinkedIn for job hunting, interview techniques etc. | Expand and resource the careers teams to provide the additional support. Academic and Professional Service staff time, including building on and enhancing employer relationships with relevant land-based / agricultural employers to support disabled students. | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students Better prepared and informed for job roles | Success Objective 5 University Strategy Working with the RAU Students' Union |

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve progression (employability and / or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students. | 6.2 continued<br><br>Provide dialogue and help to disabled students to improve CV's and provide confidence in the process.<br><br>Expand scope of offer to have dedicated disabled student support sessions and offer this up to 3 years post-graduation. | Help disabled students to undertake peer CV review and build confidence in writing different CV formats | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews<br><br>Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students<br><br>Better prepared and informed for job roles | Success Objective 5<br><br>University Strategy<br><br>Working with the RAU Students' Union |
| | STUDENT INTERVENTIONS –<br><br>6.3 **– Career Fairs**, requesting that all organisations and employers attending future RAU Careers Fairs provide information on how they support disabled staff members, so that this can be highlighted to students in advance of the fair. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, including building on and enhancing employer relationships with relevant land-based / agricultural employers to support disabled students.<br><br>Expand and resource the careers teams to provide the additional support. | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews<br><br>Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students<br><br>Better prepared and informed for job roles | Success Objective 5<br><br>University Strategy<br><br>Working with the RAU Students' Union |

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve progression (employability and / or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students. | SERVICE INTERVENTIONS – *Internal Actions taken by the RAU to improve the quality of its provision to support disabled and disadvantaged students during their RAU degree.*<br><br>6.4 - **Improving placement opportunities for disabled students** with local and regional employers.<br><br>Building on good graduate employability choices – improve quantity and quality of dedicated disabled support including relationship with employers who support the two-tick system, disabled accredited employers and disability conferences with employability focus.<br><br>Identify, review and remove potential barriers for disabled students not seeking or desiring placement opportunities e.g., unaffordable travel costs and look to subsidis**e** where feasible for all students in need.<br><br>Ensure all placements are accessible and review safety measures for disabled students to avoid any additional risks. Continue to enhance and develop placement service for all students, mindful of disabled student desires and requirements.<br><br>Continue to use University enterprise and start-up businesses to enhance undergraduate employability including through expanding opportunity at the University Vineyard and Cotswold Hills Project. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, including building on and enhancing employer relationships with relevant land-based / agricultural employers to support disabled students.<br><br>Undertake scoping exercise to improve disabled placement opportunities.<br><br>Provide travel bursary as appropriate for disabled students unable to attend physical interviews when know online option is provided.<br><br>Careers team to encourage pre-placement workshops for disabled students to assist with application and on-boarding process.<br><br>Create a range of shorter placements circa 15-week durations and offer two shorter placements as an option to disabled students should this be more appropriate.<br><br>Undertake case review of Agcast – and explore a range of options to support disabled students. | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews<br><br>Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students<br><br>Better prepared and informed for job roles<br><br>Data to be monitored by Institutional Planning and Academic Services on success outcomes | Success Objective 5<br><br>University Strategy<br><br>Working with the RAU Students' Union<br><br>TEF Improvement Plan |

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve progression (employability and / or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students. | SERVICE INTERVENTIONS – <br><br>6.5. **RAU Connect – continue to enhance the RAU mentoring scheme** through the enterprise and employability office. Look to provide circa 10 hours of mentoring support per year to disabled students and encourage take up. <br><br>Provide external coach and mentoring scheme to encourage future employability. | Train and recruit a sufficient level of mentoring staff to help expand the scope of the existing scheme. <br><br>Academic and Professional Service staff time, including building on and enhancing employer relationships with relevant agricultural mentors and specialist coaches to support disabled students. | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews <br><br>Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students <br><br>Better prepared and informed for job roles | Success Objective 5 <br><br>University Strategy <br><br>Working with the RAU Students' Union |
| | SERVICE INTERVENTIONS - <br><br>6.6 – **Offering paid work experience opportunities within the RAU**, so that they can gain required experience, skills and get a taste for the world of work, building their confidence to take the next step. <br><br>Offer options for both campus delivery including satellite sites such as Fosse Hill or the wider estate. <br><br>Provision offered will be shorter than the compulsory placement period, and open to disabled students from all years. Our Risk Register and external research has found that it is harder for disabled students to find work experience. | Employability and Enterprise team to organise for a Postgraduate study stand to be present and staffed by an appropriate academic (with postgraduate expertise) at careers fairs, with encouragement to disabled students from Student Services team to attend and consider graduate employment options and further study. <br><br>Academic and Professional Service staff time, including building on and enhancing employer relationships with relevant land-based / agricultural employers to support disabled students. | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews <br><br>Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students <br><br>Better prepared and informed for job roles | Success Objective 5 <br><br>University Strategy <br><br>Working with the RAU Students' Union |

| Activity | Description | Inputs | Outcomes | Cross intervention strategy? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve progression (employability and / or further study), between disabled and non-disabled students. | SERVICE IMPROVEMENT<br><br>6.7 – **Employability and Enterprise team to organise for a Postgraduate study** stand to be present and staffed by an appropriate academic (with postgraduate expertise) at careers fairs, with encouragement to disabled students from Student Services team to attend and consider graduate employment options and further study. | Academic and Professional Service staff time, including building on and enhancing employer relationships with relevant land-based / agricultural employers to support disabled students.<br><br>**Alumni 20% Fee discount** for Postgraduate student – RAU graduate. | Better and enhanced confidence for graduates attending interviews<br><br>Improved career outcomes including high skill job outcomes for disabled students<br><br>Better prepared and informed for job roles | Success Objective 5<br><br>University Strategy<br><br>Working with the RAU Students' Union |

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025 26 to 2028 29

**Provider name: The Royal Agricultural University**

**Provider UKPRN: 10005545**

### Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

**Inflation statement:**

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X

**Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants**

| Full-time course type: | Additional information: | Sub-contractual UKPRN: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|---|
| First degree | | N/A | 9250 |
| Foundation degree | | N/A | 9250 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | | N/A | 9250 |
| HNC/HND | * | N/A | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | N/A | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | N/A | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | N/A | * |
| Sandwich year | | N/A | 1850 |
| Turing Scheme and overseas study years | * | N/A | * |
| Other | * | N/A | * |

**Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26**

| Sub-contractual full-time course type: | Sub-contractual provider name and additional information: | Sub-contractual UKPRN: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|---|
| First degree | Capel Manor College | 10001148 | 9250 |
| Foundation degree | Capel Manor College | 10001148 | 9250 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * | * |
| HNC/HND | * | * | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | * | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * | * |
| Turing Scheme and overseas study years | * | * | * |
| Other | * | * | * |

**Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants**

| Part-time course type: | Additional information: | Sub-contractual UKPRN: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|---|
| First degree | | N/A | 4625 |
| Foundation degree | | N/A | 4625 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | | N/A | 4625 |
| HNC/HND | * | N/A | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | N/A | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | N/A | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | N/A | * |
| Sandwich year | * | N/A | * |
| Turing Scheme and overseas study years | * | N/A | * |
| Other | * | N/A | * |

**Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26**

| Sub-contractual part-time course type: | Sub-contractual provider name and additional information: | Sub-contractual UKPRN: | Course fee: |
|---|---|---|---|
| First degree | Capel Manor College | 10001148 | 4625 |
| Foundation degree | Capel Manor College | 10001148 | 4625 |
| Foundation year/Year 0 | * | * | * |
| HNC/HND | * | * | * |
| CertHE/DipHE | * | * | * |
| Postgraduate ITT | * | * | * |
| Accelerated degree | * | * | * |
| Sandwich year | * | * | * |
| Turing Scheme and overseas study years | * | * | * |
| Other | * | * | * |

# Fees, investments and targets
## 2025 26 to 2028 29

**Provider name: The Royal Agricultural University**

**Provider UKPRN: 10005545**

### Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

**Notes about the data:**

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OfS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

### Table 6b - Investment summary

| Access and participation plan investment summary (£) | Breakdown | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access activity investment (£) | NA | £681,000 | £715,000 | £751,000 | £788,000 |
| Financial support (£) | NA | £111,000 | £117,000 | £123,000 | £129,000 |
| Research and evaluation (£) | NA | £51,000 | £54,000 | £57,000 | £60,000 |

### Table 6d - Investment estimates

| Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000) | Breakdown | 2025-26 | 2026-27 | 2027-28 | 2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Access activity investment | Pre-16 access activities (£) | £99,000 | £104,000 | £109,000 | £114,000 |
| Access activity investment | Post-16 access activities (£) | £529,000 | £555,000 | £583,000 | £612,000 |
| Access activity investment | Other access activities (£) | £53,000 | £56,000 | £59,000 | £62,000 |
| **Access activity investment** | **Total access investment (£)** | **£681,000** | **£715,000** | **£751,000** | **£788,000** |
| **Access activity investment** | *Total access investment (as % of HFI)* | **25.3%** | **24.5%** | **24.4%** | **24.3%** |
| **Access activity investment** | *Total access investment funded from HFI (£)* | **£510,000** | **£544,000** | **£580,000** | **£617,000** |
| **Access activity investment** | *Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)* | **£171,000** | **£171,000** | **£171,000** | **£171,000** |
| Financial support investment | Bursaries and scholarships (£) | £111,000 | £117,000 | £123,000 | £129,000 |
| Financial support investment | Fee waivers (£) | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| Financial support investment | Hardship funds (£) | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 |
| **Financial support investment** | **Total financial support investment (£)** | **£111,000** | **£117,000** | **£123,000** | **£129,000** |
| **Financial support investment** | *Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)* | **4.1%** | **4.0%** | **4.0%** | **4.0%** |
| Research and evaluation investment | Research and evaluation investment (£) | £51,000 | £54,000 | £57,000 | £60,000 |
| Research and evaluation investment | *Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)* | 1.9% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.9% |

# Fees, investments and targets

## 2025 26 to 2028 29

**Provider name: The Royal Agricultural University**

**Provider UKPRN: 10005545**

## Targets

**Table 5b: Access and/or raising attainment targets**

| Aim [500 characters maximum] | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum] | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Increase the number and proportion of students entering the RAU from low-participation neighbourhoods (IMD) Quintile 1 & 2 | PTA_1 | Access | Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivations [IMD]) | IMD quintile 1 and 2 | IMD quintile 5 | RAU APP Objective 1: ACCESS Objective - Identified as highest RAU Equality of Opportunity Risk - Aligns to EORR 1, 3, 4 and 11. Data source is multiple including instititional EORR - see APP and APP dashboard | No | Other data source (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23 | Percentage points | 15% | 16 | 17 | 18 | 20 |
| Increase the number and proportion of students entering the RAU from state run schools and colleges. | PTA_2 | Access | Intersection of characteristics | Other (please specify in description) | | Increase the propotion of state school pupils at the RAU compared to those educated in private schools. Data source is multiple including institutional EORR and APP dashboard | No | Other data source (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23 | Percentage | 65% | 70 | 70% | 72 | 75 |
| Maintain the number and proportion of students entering the RAU from an armed forces background or family, whilst growing overall student population | PTA_3 | Access | Other | Other (please specify in description) | | To maintain the number and proportion of students from armed forces backgrounds, whilst growing the overall student population. Data source is multiple including institutional EORR and APP dashboard | No | Other data source (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23 | Percentage | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| Increase the number and proportion of students entering the RAU from a global majoirty ethnic background | PTA_4 | Access | Ethnicity | Not specified (please give detail in description) | | Increase non-white student ethnic minorities at the RAU as an overall percentage. Data source is multiple including institutional EORR and APP dashboard | No | Other data source (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23 | Percentage | 6.5% | 8% | 9% | 10% | 11% |
| | PTA_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTA_12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 5d: Success targets**

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum] | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reduce the degree attainment gap (1st Class and 2:1) degrees or 60%+) between disabled and non-disabled students | PTS_1 | Attainment | Reported disability | Disability reported | No disability reported | To improve attainment of reported disabled (all disabilities) to non-disabled - measured by 60%+ overall in degree classification or 2:1 or better. Data source is multiple including instititional EORR - see APP and APP dashboard and GOS dashboard | No | Other data source (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23 | Percentage | 15% | 14% | 13% | 12% | 10% |
| | PTS_2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTS_12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table 5e: Progression targets**

| Aim (500 characters maximum) | Reference number | Lifecycle stage | Characteristic | Target group | Comparator group | Description and commentary [500 characters maximum] | Is this target collaborative? | Data source | Baseline year | Units | Baseline data | 2025-26 milestone | 2026-27 milestone | 2027-28 milestone | 2028-29 milestone |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improve progression (employability and / or further study) between disabled and non-reported disabled graduates | PTP_1 | Progression | Reported disability | Disability reported | No disability reported | To improve graduate outcomes / progression for reported disabled students.  Data source is multiple including instititional EORR - see APP and APP dashboard | No | Other data source (please include details in commentary) | 2022-23 | Percentage | 7% | 6.5% | 6% | 5% | 4% |
| | PTP_2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | PTP_12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |