

Royal Agricultural University

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

You can see the full access and participation plan for the Royal Agricultural University at <https://www.rau.ac.uk/access-agreements-and-access-and-participation-plans>

Key points

The Royal Agricultural University is a small provider with around 1,100 students and a strong specialism in land-based subjects. A key priority is to **grow and diversify the student community**, embedding this aim across all University activities, including this APP.

We aim to:

1. **Increase access** for underrepresented groups, particularly those who:
 - Come from areas of deprivation (IMD Quintiles 1 and 2).
 - Attend state schools and colleges.
 - Are from global majority ethnic backgrounds.
 - Are Armed Forces veterans or from Armed Forces families.
2. **Improve success rates**, particularly by:
 - Reducing attainment gaps between disabled and non-disabled students.
3. **Support progression**, ensuring that:
 - Disabled students achieve comparable outcomes in employment or further study as their non-disabled peers.

See pages 9-10 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

At the Royal Agricultural University, the maximum fees charged for UK students in 2024/25 are:

- £9,250 per year, for full-time students
- £4,625 per year, for part-time students

However, the Government has recently announced an increase for 2025/26 to a maximum of £9,535.

For more information, see page 18 of the Access and Participation Plan or visit: www.rau.ac.uk/student-life/undergraduate-funding.

Financial help available

We offer financial support to help students from underrepresented groups access higher education and complete their studies. Support includes:

- **Bursaries** of up to £3,500 annually for students from low-income households (up to a maximum of £10,500).
- **Hardship funds** for unexpected financial challenges.
- **Travel reimbursements** for target groups attending open days.
- Scholarships, including the **Next Generation Scholarship** for ethnic minorities.

These resources are critical to enabling students to participate fully in their studies.

For more details, see pages 17-18 of the Access and Participation Plan.

Information for students

Information about our University, our fees and financial support is described in detail on our [university website](#). This includes a dedicated area for student finance which hosts a video from Student Finance England to describe financial arrangements.

In addition, prospective student receives information through our prospectus, at open days and offer holder days, through email communication, by direct contact with our admissions and support staff and through our outreach activity with schools, colleges and their teachers. Current students also receive a range of finance and hardship information through a Student Handbook.

See pages 27-29 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aim is to support students from underrepresented groups to access higher education, achieve their potential, and succeed in their careers.

We aim to:

- **Increase representation:**
 - Students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 from 15% to 20% by 2028/29.
 - State school students from 65% to 75% by 2028/29.
 - Students from global majority ethnic backgrounds from 6.5% to 11% by 2028/29.
 - Maintain representation of Armed Forces veterans or family members at 7%.
- **Reduce attainment gaps** between disabled and non-disabled students from 15% to 10% by 2028/29.
- **Improve progression rates** for disabled students, reducing the gap in employment or further study from 7% to 4% by 2028/29.

For specific targets, see pages 9-10 of the Access and Participation Plan.

What we are doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity

We are implementing a wide range of activities to achieve these goals:

1. Working with schools and colleges, particularly in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and around our Swindon site, to raise aspirations and improve attainment for underrepresented groups.
2. Offering outreach programs, such as free summer schools and the Compact Scheme, to provide a pathway to studying at the RAU.
3. Collaborating with external organisations, including the GROWS UniConnect Partnership, Swindon Learning Together network, and land-based colleges, to support diverse groups like care-experienced students and military families.
4. Maintaining partnerships such as the Care Leavers Covenant and Armed Forces Covenant to demonstrate our commitment to these groups.
5. Providing financial support through targeted bursaries and scholarships to help students succeed.
6. Offering flexible degree options, such as Foundation Years, Foundation Degrees and Top-Up courses, tailored to diverse student needs.
7. Developing an inclusive Teaching and Learning Strategy, integrating skills development, employability, and work placements into the curriculum.
8. Enhancing student support services, with personalised tutoring, expanded mental health resources, and disability support.

For more details, see pages 11-24 of the Access and Participation Plan.

How students can get involved

Student input is vital to our APP. We work closely with the Students' Union to:

- Regular student representation on strategic committees.
- Gather feedback through surveys and consultations.
- Collaborate on the design and evaluation of APP activities.

For more details, see page 27 of the Access and Participation Plan.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

We use robust evaluation methods, including:

- Monitoring access, attainment, and progression data.
- Regular feedback to refine activities.
- Oversight by the Finance & Strategic Planning Steering Group.

Progress is reviewed quarterly, and outcomes are shared annually with stakeholders.

See pages 25-29 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

For more information about our Access and Participation Plan, please contact:
Will Marsh, Director of External Relations at will.marsh@rau.ac.uk