

Burnley College

Summary of 2026-27 to 2029-30 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Burnley College at [Burnley College Access and Participation Plan 2026/27 to 2029/30](#).

Key points

Burnley College is a well-established Further Education College in East Lancashire and provides higher education, through Burnley College University Courses (BCUC). We are a smaller university provider, with around 750 students (2024/25) and we work to support students to access education and succeed, whatever their background.

We offer different ways to study, including Higher National Certificates/Diplomas, degree courses and degree apprenticeships, and have successful partnerships with the University of Lancashire, the University of Greater Manchester, Pearson and Edge Hill University.

Through our access and participation plan, we aim to make higher education more accessible for students of Asian ethnicity, in consideration of our local community. We intend to work closely with schools, provide clear information, advice and guidance and offer more access courses, to help students progress into higher education.

We also recognise that outcomes can vary for students of Asian ethnicity, disabled students and those from a lower income household, when compared with their peers. We will improve the outcomes for these groups through various activities, intended to inform, support and offer equal opportunities for students.

See pages 1-4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

At Burnley College, the maximum fees we currently charge are:

- £9275 for full-time students, £5605 for full-time foundation year/year 0 students
- £4600 for part-time students

You can find a full list of our fees, in our fee summary document, which can be found on our policies and procedures webpage: [Burnley College Policies and Procedures](#)

See page 47 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Financial help available

To support students to continue through their studies, we offer our BCUC bursary to all full-time undergraduates, with payments made each year of their course. There are three levels of support, based on household income, and students are encouraged to reach 90% attendance and to have submitted all work. Students from households earning the lowest income bracket of under £25,000, can receive the highest award up to £2,500 over a four-year course.

We provide further financial support for students who progress onto a top-up course or our Post-Graduate Certificate in Education, and a separate bursary worth £1000 per year for care experienced students under 25 years old.

Students in financial hardship can also apply for additional funds, based on financial assessment and personal circumstances.

You can find information about financial support at: [BCUC - Financial Support](#)

See pages 47-48 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Information on course fees and financial support is made available to prospective students, on our website, in our prospectus and via outreach events such as our information, advice and guidance evenings. Applicants can drop in or discuss their circumstances at interview and where offered a place, they will receive a copy of the student handbook and relevant policies.

Students currently studying with us, can also access information via the student Portal and support team.

See page 47 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aim is to improve the chance of underrepresented groups entering into higher education and to support all students to achieve their goals and successful outcomes.

We have identified the following key barriers that could limit equal opportunities for our students:

- Fewer students of Asian ethnicity apply and enrol onto our provision, compared with the local population, which may be due to the types of course on offer and a lack of clear and relatable advice and guidance.
- Students are less likely to stay on and complete their course, if they are of Asian ethnicity, are disabled or are from lower-income households. This is often because students don't have access to sufficient academic and personal support, to meet their individual needs, and where additional challenges due to mental ill health.

Students also face cost pressures, with a high number of students working alongside their studies, and are more likely to continue if they build a strong sense of belonging and connection to BCUC.

- There is a gap in academic achievement, between students of Asian and White ethnicity, completing the same level of study. This can be impacted by different personal circumstances and previous experiences or achievement in education.

We have set the following targets, based on a detailed review of our performance:

To increase the continuation rate for all full-time first-degree students from 71.9% to 80% by 2029/30.

1. Asian Ethnic Background

- 1.1. To increase the number of Asian students accessing higher education from 16% of new starters to a minimum of 18.2% by 2029/30.
- 1.2. To increase the continuation rate for full-time first-degree Asian students from 61.2% by a minimum of 3% per year, for the duration of the plan.
- 1.3. To increase the completion rate for full-time first-degree Asian students from 70.2% to a minimum of 75% by 2029/30. To reduce the gap between Asian and White students by 1.5% per year, over the duration of this plan.
- 1.4. To reduce the attainment gap between full-time first degree Asian and White students by a minimum of 17.5% by 2029/30.

2. Disability

- 2.1. To increase the continuation rate for all full-time first-degree disabled students from 64.7% by 4.5% per year, for the duration of this plan.

- 2.2. To increase the continuation rate for disabled full-time other undergraduates from 70.1% to a minimum of 75% by 2029/30.
- 2.3. To increase the completion rate for full-time first-degree disabled students from 67.5% to a minimum of 75% by 2029/30.

3. Lower income households

- 3.1. To increase the continuation rate for all full-time first-degree students in quintile 1 of IMD 2019, from 68.3% by 3% per year, for the duration of this plan.

See pages 5-6 of the access and participation plan for more information.

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

To support access into higher education, we will expand our outreach activities and access courses, including working with schools and parents/guardians to raise aspirations and develop academic skills.

We will develop a transition support package for disabled students and work with the National Centre for Diversity, to review policies and implement a new framework for inclusivity. To support a sense of belonging at BCUC and promote mental wellbeing, we will introduce peer mentorship and student ambassadors, whilst developing wellbeing resources and a central enrichment offer.

To reduce gaps in attainment or academic skills, we will offer enhanced online academic support and schedule new workshops.

See pages 7-43 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

Student feedback is key to shaping our activities and we offer regular chances to share views and suggestions, through surveys and course meetings with staff. Each course has an elected student representative and students can also apply to join our executive board, to relay the perspective of their peers and be involved in decision-making.

We will create a new access and participation working group with students, staff and managers, to engage with this plan and review progress. Students from the groups highlighted will also be invited to help design resources and give feedback on their experiences.

See pages 45-46 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

This plan is based on current evidence of what works to improve access and success, for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. We will measure progress using data and student feedback, and review the effectiveness of this plan within relevant working groups, per term. Evaluation findings will be reported annually into these groups and published on our website.

See page 46 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact HE.support@burnley.ac.uk for more information.