



UNIVERSITY OF
LIVERPOOL

Widening
Participation
and Outreach

WIDENING PARTICIPATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

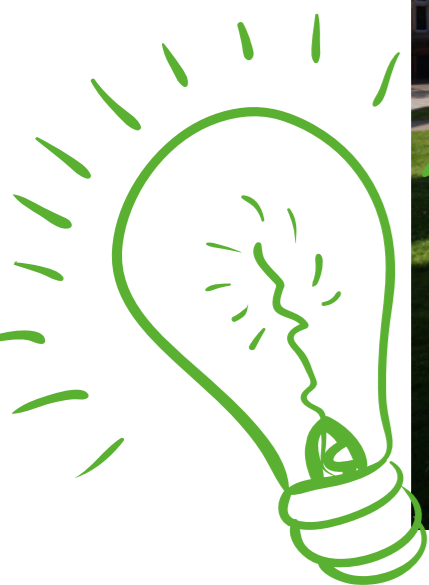
**Providing
opportunities
and nurturing
talent.**

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Looking back



This year brings to a close the University of Liverpool Access and Participation Plan (APP) for 2020–2025, an ambitious plan which has guided our commitment to social mobility over the last five years. Through identifying barriers to access and participation and what works in tackling them, adapting and changing policies and practices which impede success, creating a culture which enables students to fully engage with their University community and committing to support students at all stages of their University experience, we have delivered innovative, exciting work aligned with the University's commitment to *the advancement of learning and ennoblement of life*.

This work includes:

- Increasing the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students entering the University of Liverpool by 4% between Entry 2020 and Entry 2024
- Increasing the proportion of students from POLAR Quintile 1 by 3% between Entry 2020 and Entry 2024
- Launching 'Welcome 2024', with a simplified, stress reducing and clear 'Welcome' message for staff and students. By reducing and refocusing the content to focus on 'needs' for students, supported by 'nice to have' aspects, students could begin their time at University with less confusion and stress, and enjoy the start of University life
- Over 650 widening participation students have taken part in Global Opportunities between 2020 and 2025
- Provided intensive, 1-2-1 raising attainment support and activities for over 360 Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students over the last five years.

Doubling the number of care experienced students entering the University of Liverpool between Entry 2020 and Entry 2024.

304
Awarding 304 Liverpool Scholars undergraduate degrees from the University of Liverpool between Entry 2020 and Entry 2024.



488
488 Liverpool Scholars beginning undergraduate studies at University of Liverpool between Entry 2020 and Entry 2024.

Looking forward

In 2024 we submitted our latest Access and Participation Plan (APP) to the Office for Students, the regulatory body for Higher Education, and are pleased to share it was approved in August 2024.



With the changes in the sector since 2020, there have been updates to the APP regulations. The Office for Students has asked universities to focus their APPs on the particular risks to equality of opportunity seen at their institution.

At Liverpool, that means that we have updated our targets and designed new activities tailored to our specific students. There is also an additional focus on evaluating the impact of our APP – we will be learning about our students and what they need, as well as whether the activities we designed are helping them meet their goals.



Rachel
3rd Year Medical student



“On 27th November 2024, the Widening Participation and Outreach team hosted a launch for the newly approved APP and invited me along to speak. The launch was attended by over 100 staff from across the University, including people from each Faculty and different Professional Services teams.

After the new targets were introduced, new areas of work were highlighted which contribute to these targets, like Liverpool Plus, the Widening Participation Student Panel and the Black Student Panel, and we heard updates on Transforming Student Support and 100 Days, 100 Voices.

I then shared my experience as a widening participation student, including participating in the Liverpool Scholars scheme before University, working as a Liverpool Advocate alongside my studies, benefiting from the Liverpool Bursary and taking part in the Widening Participation Student Panel to contribute to the design of activities like Liverpool Plus.”

The Access and Participation Plan 2025–2029 identifies three groups who face risks in their access and success at the University of Liverpool:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic students are less likely to study with us, and less likely to achieve a 2:1 degree classification or above
- Students from areas of high deprivation (determined using Index of Multiple Deprivation data), are less likely to study with us, and more likely to drop out of their studies
- Students with disabilities are less likely to achieve a 2:1 or above.



After carefully analysing data on these student groups, we have focused on six key targets which we will aim to achieve by 2029. These targets are:

Target

Increase the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students studying at the University of Liverpool from **18.9% to 21.8%**

Increase the proportion of students from areas of high deprivation studying at the University of Liverpool from **16.7% to 18.1%**

Decrease the continuation gap for students from areas of high deprivation compared to those from areas of low deprivation from **3.9% to 1.31%**
The continuation gap is the measure of how many students continue their studies from one year to the next

Decrease the completion gap for students from areas of high deprivation compared to those from areas of low deprivation from **6.1% to 4%**

The completion gap is the measure of how many students complete their degree within 4 years

Ensure students with disabilities achieve degree classification awards of **2:1 or above** at the same rate as students without disabilities

Decrease the degree awarding gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and white students from **8.8% to 4.3%** and eliminate the gap by 2032
The degree awarding gap is the difference in the number of first or second class degrees awarded to different groups of students

You can view both the full 2025–2029 Access and Participation Plan, and a summary document on our website, or contact the Widening Participation and Outreach team for more information: widupart@liverpool.ac.uk



Faculty Spotlight Health and Life Sciences



The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences has delivered two flagship initiatives aiming to support Black students, which directly contribute to the University of Liverpool's Bronze Race Equality Award and ISMIB's Gold Athena Swan Award.

Black Science Bootcamp

In 2023 and 2024, the Faculty hosted 86 Year 10 and 11 students from local schools for a two day residential programme. Led by Amal Abdulkadir and Professor Carl Larsen, and funded by the Faculty's Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Fund, the bootcamps aim to inspire young Black students to consider HE and careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine), addressing systemic issues like retention, the awarding gap and progression into postgraduate study.



Under the theme 'It's hard to be what you can't see', the programme emphasised representation, with Black STEM students, academics and professionals as session leaders. Year 10 students toured cutting-edge research facilities, including cancer labs and GeneMill, while engaging in hands-on experiments such as electrophoresis. Personal stories from current students provided relatable role models, while collaboration with Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) added unique experiences like visiting the Herpetarium and observing venom milking. Year 11s explored Dentistry, Medicine, Veterinary Science, Radiography and Allied Health Professions, and had a Q+A with the BME Medics Society.

For the Liverpool Scholars programme in 2024, attendance at the bootcamp was made a qualifying criteria, and we have seen 17 students progress on to the Scholars programme.



Black Legacy in Student Success (BLISS) Mentoring Scheme

This initiative aims to support Black students pursuing careers in STEM by providing them with the guidance, community and resources to thrive in their academic and professional journeys.

Supported by the Faculty's EDI Fund, Amal Abdulkadir, Dr Seun Esan and Professor Carl Larsen set up the scheme to help address the critical under-representation of Black individuals in STEM fields. The awarding gap and completion gap between Black, Asian and minority ethnic students and their white peers contributes to a cycle where white professionals are three times more likely to attain professorships than their Black counterparts.

Under the theme 'How to be what you can't see', colleagues at the University have developed this scheme in partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University and the LSTM, highlighting regional commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion in the North West. After launching in 2024, 40 students and 14 mentors have been partnered.

Faculty Spotlight Science and Engineering



Work Experience Week at the Central Teaching Laboratories

In July 2024, fifteen Year 12 students on the Liverpool Scholars and Realising Opportunities programmes were selected to participate in work experience at the University of Liverpool Central Teaching Laboratories (CTL). The week was designed and delivered by CTL Technicians and current undergraduate and postgraduate students and aimed to introduce the Year 12 students, all from widening participation backgrounds, to studying Chemistry, Physics and Environmental Science at university level.

The CTL houses eight lab spaces used in the delivery of undergraduate teaching. The Year 12 students took part in a bespoke timetable of activities including building circuits to construct their own electronic sensors, wet Chemistry and bath bomb creation, managing volcanic eruptions, microscope maintenance, usage and testing, and x-raying chocolate surprise eggs. The Year 12 students were asked to build on their existing scientific knowledge to complete the task, while also taking part in comprehensive laboratory health and safety training.

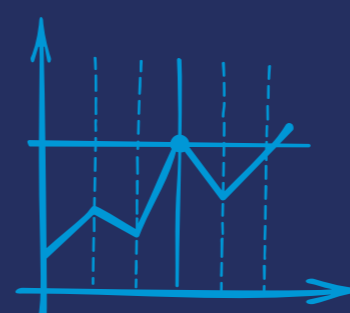
Reion is a Liverpool Scholar who took part in the work experience:

"During my week at the CTL, I gained valuable insight into what being a student at the University of Liverpool might look like. Getting hands-on experience in a formal lab setting helped me develop vital skills, such as communicating as part of a team, lab conduct, and using complex equipment, among many others. This week was both enjoyable and beneficial, providing me with skills that I can carry forward and continue to develop."

Throughout the week, each student enjoyed 30 hours of dedicated contact time. The intensive, small group setting of the work experience placement maximised learning opportunities and provided students the chance to develop the skills most closely linked to their University aspirations. The Work Experience Week was part of a range of additional opportunities offered to Liverpool Scholars over summer 2024, such as the Destination Summer Schools, all designed to enhance their experience on the scheme.

"Supporting the CTL to deliver Work Experience Week for Liverpool Scholars was an amazing experience as a past Liverpool Scholar, to be able to inspire other students with the knowledge I have gained through my studies. It was incredible to see the students open up and gain confidence throughout the week, as they experienced what it is like to be a university student."

Megan
Digital Chemistry MSc, Former Liverpool Scholar



Faculty Spotlight

Humanities and Social Sciences

Go Higher

The Go Higher Humanities Foundation Diploma prepares students, predominantly from widening participation backgrounds, for entry to undergraduate study at the University of Liverpool, supporting our Access and Participation Plan targets to increase access for students from areas of high deprivation.

Go Higher is a one-year, part time programme, for students who may be returning to learning, who lack traditional entry qualifications, or who want to change direction to the arts or social sciences. Go Higher combines study skills (how to take notes, academic writing and how to think critically) with learning sessions to introduce a variety of disciplines, including:

- English
- History
- Law
- Philosophy
- Sociology
- Maths for University

'I've entered into my 3rd year of my degree in Egyptology and Archaeology. All being well I hope to do a master's degree then a PhD. Doing the Go Higher Diploma was the best thing I have ever done'.

This broad study programme supports students to become confident, independent learners, setting them up for success with their undergraduate studies. Go Higher is transformative for individuals, their families and their communities. We have provided a gateway to a secure future for many students, including a young woman who was the victim of sex trafficking, care-experienced adults, refugees and individuals with disabilities which created barriers to accessing the usual entry requirements. 45% of Go Higher students in 2022-23 and 2023-24 disclosed a disability, substantially higher than the proportion of Year 1 students disclosing a disability in the same years.



Image credit: Andrew Teebay, Liverpool Echo.

The culture and ethos of Go Higher is a particular strength, with students feeling supported and reporting a strong sense of belonging. Informal mentoring between current and former Go Higher students contributes to this, along with a new initiative this year, the highly successful Wednesday Mature Student Breakfast delivered by the student experience team.

'I'm in the second year of my English and History joint honours degree, managing to balance student life and family life with the help of skills and friends gained during Go Higher!'

After achieving their Go Higher Diploma, hundreds of students have progressed onto undergraduate study, with a large proportion progressing to study for Masters and PhD at Liverpool and across the UK. As of July 2024, 9 former Go Higher students were enrolled on Masters programmes and 10 on PhD programmes at the University of Liverpool.

The academic year 2024-25 marks the 25th anniversary of the Go Higher diploma



Foundation Programmes



One of the Office for Students priorities for achieving equality of opportunity is to develop more diverse pathways into and through higher education, through more flexible courses.

As part of the University's commitment to this, we offer a range of Foundation Year programmes in partnership with **Carmel College**, which lead to direct progression onto degree courses at the University. This includes:

Science and Engineering Foundation Years for:
Biological Sciences/Chemical Sciences/Computer Sciences/Earth Science/Engineering/Geography/Mathematical Sciences/Physical Sciences

Health & Veterinary Foundation Years for:
Allied Health Professions/Dentistry/Dental Therapy/Medicine/Nursing/Veterinary Science.

This is designed for mature students, or those with non-traditional qualifications, this programme also focuses on the study skills needed for independent study at undergraduate level.

Foundation Year students are taught at **Carmel College**, benefitting from small class sizes and a strong support network, but are also full members of the University of Liverpool community, with access to on campus Library, Sports Facilities, Careers support and much more.



Alongside our partnership with **Carmel College**, we also partner with **Wirral Met College** to deliver a Psychology BSc 2+2 programme with Foundation Element, with **Wirral Met College**. Aimed at people not applying directly from school or college, who have non-standard qualifications, or who wish work or life experience to be considered in their application, this programme offers two years study at **Wirral Met College**, introducing academic psychology through a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach. Students then progress into the second year of Psychology BSc at the University of Liverpool.



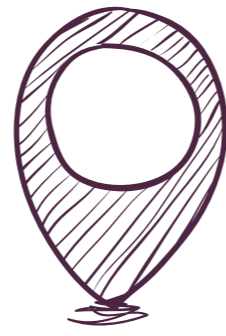
The Foundation Year at Liverpool has been truly beneficial to me. I had no A-Levels and the only other option for me was to study at night school. The Foundation Year gave me the opportunity to learn all of the key themes and subjects I'd need to be successful in my first year of University. As I have progressed throughout Year 1, I have found how abundant the content of the Foundation Year is and I don't feel like I am behind anybody else - I feel so confident with the material that was taught in Year 0 that is now being taught at a higher level, and I feel even more confident learning new subjects as I feel I have been thoroughly prepared.

Elouise
1st Year Dentistry Student



IntoUniversity Kirkby

IntoUniversity 



Following the success of IntoUniversity North Liverpool, the University of Liverpool, along with the LFC Foundation, Everton in the Community and the Steve Morgan Foundation funded a new centre, based in Kirkby Town Centre.

IntoUniversity Kirkby opened their doors in autumn 2023 and has supported over 850 students in its first year, across programmes including Primary FOCUS, Secondary FOCUS and Academic Support.

Through the Primary FOCUS programme, IntoUniversity Kirkby delivered 28 workshops to 462 students across four schools. This was over 30% above their first year target, showing the fantastic reception IntoUniversity has had with local schools.

"It was lovely to see how some of our less confident children came out of their shell during the weeks. Our students have also been able to develop their debating skills, and the questions they have asked about their futures shows how interested they are in university. They are inspired and realise that they have the potential to attend university. We had many messages from parents afterwards expressing how much their children enjoyed the week and how much they liked the graduation."

Teacher at an IntoUniversity Kirkby partner primary school

365 secondary students engaged with Secondary FOCUS programmes delivered by IntoUniversity Kirkby, 150% over their first year target. These programmes included workshops like Higher Education Beyond 18, after which 88% of students reported knowing more about university.

"IntoUniversity has been really beneficial; I contacted the Kirkby team for personal statement support and received really helpful feedback. Thanks to their support I received invitations to interview from all five of my UCAS choices and have had offers from three so far. The staff who supported me were incredibly kind and patient, and I felt comfortable talking to them. I would not be in the position I am without IntoUni."

Year 13 student

Across mentoring programmes, 58 students benefited from IntoUniversity Kirkby Support, with 71% of mentees reporting improved school grades, while 127 students engaged with additional programmes such as Holiday FOCUS, where 70% of students felt their teamwork was improved.

"Mentoring has given me more confidence. I used to be nervous at Cadets but since I started mentoring I have the confidence to go on my own and make new friends. Exploring careers with my mentor has opened up more opportunities for me and focusing on Maths and algebra has made me feel more confident with my school work."

Year 7 student

"IntoUniversity has been working in partnership with the University of Liverpool and the LFC Foundation since 2017, supporting young people at our North Liverpool centre in Anfield. In 2023, we were delighted to extend this work in collaboration with the University, the LFC Foundation, the Steve Morgan Foundation and Everton in the Community. Together we have opened a new centre, IntoUniversity Kirkby and have already worked with over 850 young people and built strong relationships with schools and young people in the community. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners and stakeholders, to support many more young people to reach their full potential."

Dr Rachel Carr, Chief Executive and Co-Founder of IntoUniversity

EQ+ Inclusion Programme



The EQ+ programme continues to champion inclusivity, equity and increased opportunities for widening participation students, delivering initiatives that enhance employability. Below is a summary of key achievements and ongoing projects:



EmployAbility Partnership

This year EQ+ led on Careers & Employability department becoming a Next Generation Partner with EmployAbility, advancing career opportunities for students with disabilities. 33 students have registered so far, with staff and student awareness workshops continuing in Semester 2. Additional promotion will aim to increase engagement.

UpReach RISE Programme

EQ+ maintained its partnership with the UpReach RISE Programme, providing 60 students with tailored career support over three years. This initiative helps participants secure work experience, internships, and graduate roles across diverse industries, supporting them to achieve their career goals.



Employability Fund

The Employability Fund assists students with career-related costs such as travel and clothing for interviews and assessment centres. Phase 1 opened in October 2024, receiving 114 applications by December. Phase 2 will launch in Semester 2, continuing to build on its success.

EQ+ Awards

The EQ+ Awards will return in April 2025, recognising outstanding contributions to inclusivity within the University community. The inaugural ceremony in 2024 was a highlight of the EQ+ programme, showcasing 30 inspiring nominees, 10 employer sponsors, six judges, and representatives from across the University. Categories celebrated inclusion in areas such as neurodiversity, gender equality, disability, and entrepreneurship.

Enterprise Challenge

Building on last year's success, when 21 WP students attended the Berlin Enterprise Challenge, this year's event will take place in Belfast. It will provide students with entrepreneurial skills, opportunities to develop innovative ideas, and networking with employer partners and other universities.

In Conclusion

Through targeted orientation, personalised career support, recognition of achievements, and fostering entrepreneurship, EQ+ continues to create a transformative and inclusive experience for all students.



Scholarships



The University of Liverpool has a long history of providing financial support for students, and the expansion of widening participation scholarships over the course of the last Access and Participation Plan demonstrates this commitment. In partnership with our fantastic donors, we now offer a broad range of widening participation scholarships, which are life changing for our students. Scholarships take the financial pressure off students, allowing them to focus on their studies and taking up additional opportunities to enhance their university experience, such as internships, global opportunities, work placements, volunteering and much more.

Our current widening participation scholarships include:

Technetix Broadhurst Engineering Scholarship

For students from the University of Liverpool School of Electrical Engineering, Electronics and Computer Science, this award, launched in 2024, supports two students per year. The scholarship is provided by Technetix, who strive to make the impossible possible.

Bracken Scholarship

Made possible through the generosity of Mike Bracken, the Bracken Scholarship supports students from the Liverpool City Region to pursue their postgraduate education. The shortfall in Government funding for postgraduate degrees and living costs is something our students have identified as a key barrier to continuing their studies, so this scholarship helps open the door to postgraduate education for students from a widening participation background.

Holt Award

Provided by the Holt Education Trust, the Holt Award supports students with a strong Merseyside connection who are studying Nursing, Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy. Scholarship recipients are supported with an award to support with the additional costs of a healthcare course, such as travel to placements.

Rigby Enterprise Award

These three scholarships are made possible as part of a £1m gift from the Sir Peter Rigby Charitable Trust, which establishes the new Sir Peter Rigby Centre for Enterprise. Supporting students with an interest in entrepreneurship, these scholarships provide a financial award, and scholarship recipients will also receive support from the Centre to achieve their ambitions.



Nolan Scholarship

Paul Nolan, Global CEO of Nolan Partners, and the Nolan family are passionate about social mobility and the power of education to change lives. As part of this commitment, they have partnered with the University of Liverpool on the Nolan Scholarship, which supports local students from socio-economically under-represented backgrounds.

"I would like to say how deeply grateful I am for the kindness and generosity of the Nolan family. Receiving the scholarship means so much to me, and it has spurred me on to be able to focus on every part of my learning experience without having to worry about the financial side of family and student life as much as I was anticipating. Thank you so much for helping make my education journey a little less stressful."

Antonia, 2nd Year English student



ROLABOTIC Scholarship

The ROLABOTIC Scholarship is a competitive scholarship supporting undergraduate students from socio-economically underrepresented backgrounds. The scholarship is made possible through the generosity of Paresh Mistry, ROLABOTIC Founder and MD, who shared the inspiration behind starting the scholarship:

"Studying Accounting and Finance at Liverpool was a brilliant experience for me, but not without its challenges. I know first hand how difficult it is to fund university, balancing your studies with part time work, and worrying about whether you'll be able to afford the next trip, networking event or social event."

Through the ROLABOTIC Scholarship, I wanted to support students to fully embrace their university experience, and take on every challenge and opportunity that comes their way, allowing them to fully explore their purpose and passions."



Bloomberg Scholarship

The Bloomberg Scholarship Fund, made possible through the generosity of the late Mr Henry (Harry) Bloomberg, supports three students each year. Mr Bloomberg was a passionate advocate of education for all, regardless of background. Nish, a 2nd year Law student, Bloomberg Scholarship recipient and former Pathways to Law student shares his experience:



"The Bloomberg Scholarship has allowed me to buy more resources like textbooks to support my studies and practice materials for psychometric testing which is a necessity for a career in law. The scholarship has also allowed me to attend insight events in Manchester and London with companies like DLA Piper and BCLP. The confidence the scholarship has given me, through access to these opportunities, has inspired me to support with outreach activities like presenting at my old high school, sharing my journey to university and encouraging younger students in their own journey."

I would be struggling, and would not have had these opportunities, if not for the scholarship, so thank you!"

GeneSys Life Sciences Scholarship

Supporting students in the School of Biosciences, the GeneSys Life Sciences Scholarship provides awards to two students per year. Made possible through the GeneSys Legacy Project Ltd, scholarship recipients have also benefited from lab based work experience placements offered by GeneSys Biotech Ltd, improving future employability and career options.

Cowrie Foundation Scholarship

The University of Liverpool and the Cowrie Scholarship Foundation (CSF) offer a scholarship for Black African and Caribbean heritage applicants. The scholarship covers tuition fees and provides a maintenance stipend of £8,000 per year, offering students the opportunity to graduate debt free. Alongside support provided directly from the CSF, scholarship recipients are offered a chance to work with the Widening Participation and Outreach team on outreach work supporting Black communities and a place on the Black Student Panel.

We have awarded 65 widening participation scholarships so far!

Discover



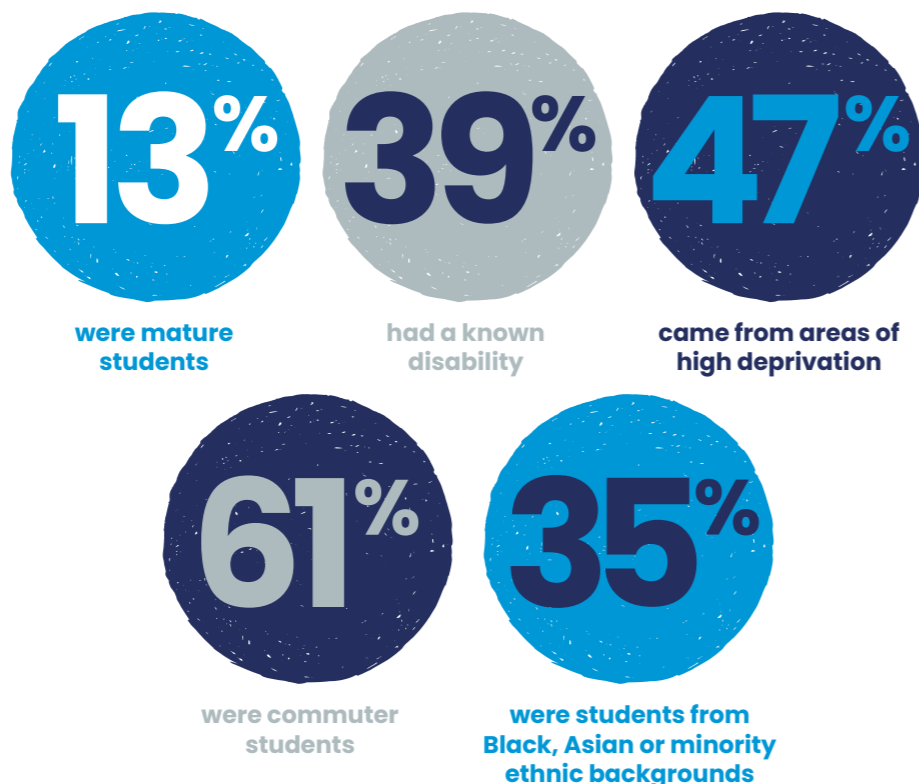
We know that many of our students from a widening participation background do not fully embrace Welcome Week activities offered by the University, and report a lack of confidence and low sense of belonging as they begin their studies.

To address some of these issues, a bespoke event was delivered as part of Welcome 2024. Organised by the Careers and Employability and Widening Participation and Outreach teams, Discover took place on the Friday before Welcome and aimed to provide an inclusive experience where students were supported to engage with teams who are key to student success, such as the Guild, Libraries, Disability Advice and Guidance and Global Opportunities.

Attendees were able to meet other students from similar backgrounds, find out more about opportunities available to them, with staff who are knowledgeable about barriers this cohort faces. Discover also highlighted opportunities specific to these students, such as widening participation scholarships. All Faculties were represented, providing a chance for students to engage at an early stage and resolve any queries around their course or timetable.



Over 250 students, parents and supporters attended the event, from a range of different courses and backgrounds. Of our attendees:



With increased confidence after attending Discover, the aim is that students are then more confident and better equipped to engage with the full Welcome programme available the following week and engaged with university life from the outset.

Discover will now be a key element of Welcome and will be back bigger and better in September 2025. Discover also acted as a launch event for Liverpool Plus, a student transition and success programme for widening participation students which runs throughout Year 1.

Student Panels



In the academic year 2023-24, the Widening Participation and Outreach team launched two Student Panels, the Widening Participation Student Panel, and the Black Student Panel.

These panels were an opportunity for students to feedback on our Access and Participation Plan 2025-29, ahead of submission to the Office for Students, and going forward will advise on initiatives to improve the experiences of under-represented students at the University of Liverpool. The panels provide a platform for our students to share their lived experience of accessing, participating in and succeeding within higher education, and help us understand concerns and barriers that they may encounter. The panels are a key element in our work to improve opportunities and outcomes for under-represented student groups at the University of Liverpool.

Widening Participation Student Panel

The Widening Participation Student Panel is made up of over 30 students from different widening participation backgrounds, including care experienced and estranged students, young adult carers, students with disabilities and students from areas of high deprivation.

They have provided feedback on barriers to accessing and succeeding in higher education, with their feedback a key part of shaping the design of the Liverpool Plus programme.

Black Student Panel

The Black Student Panel is made up of over 30 Black students from across the University, with all Faculties and levels of study from undergraduate to PhD represented. The students have shared their experiences of being a Black student at the University of Liverpool and the unique challenges they have faced, including a lack of awareness of services for the Black community, such as hairdressers skilled in styling Black hair.

Their feedback led to the creation of the highly successful Black Student Guide. Co-created with our students, the Guide highlights music, culture, nightlife, restaurants, beauty and personal care and much more.

For copies of the Black Student Guide, please contact the Widening Participation and Outreach team:

E: widpart@liverpool.ac.uk



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