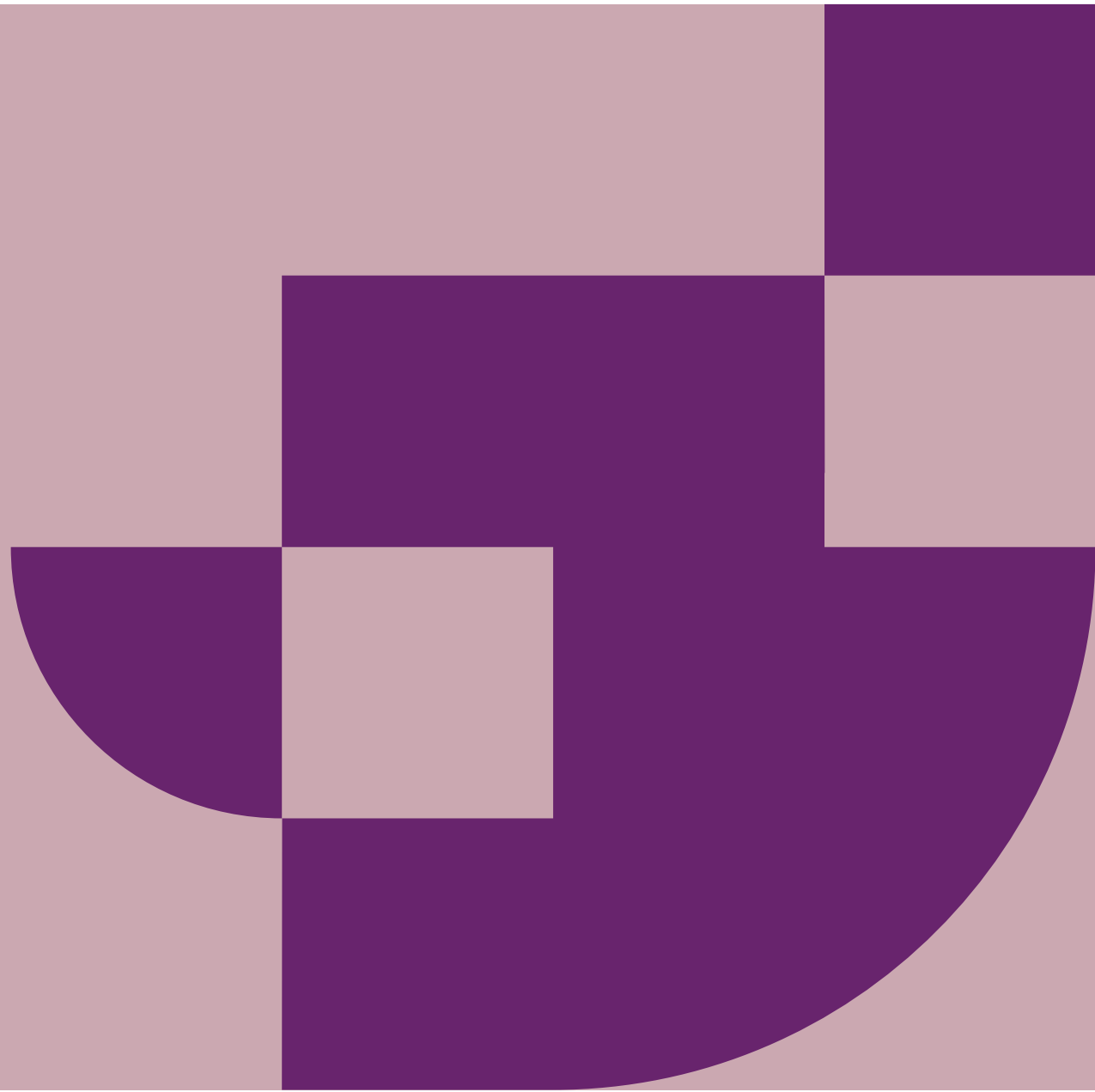




Sector-level developments and patterns



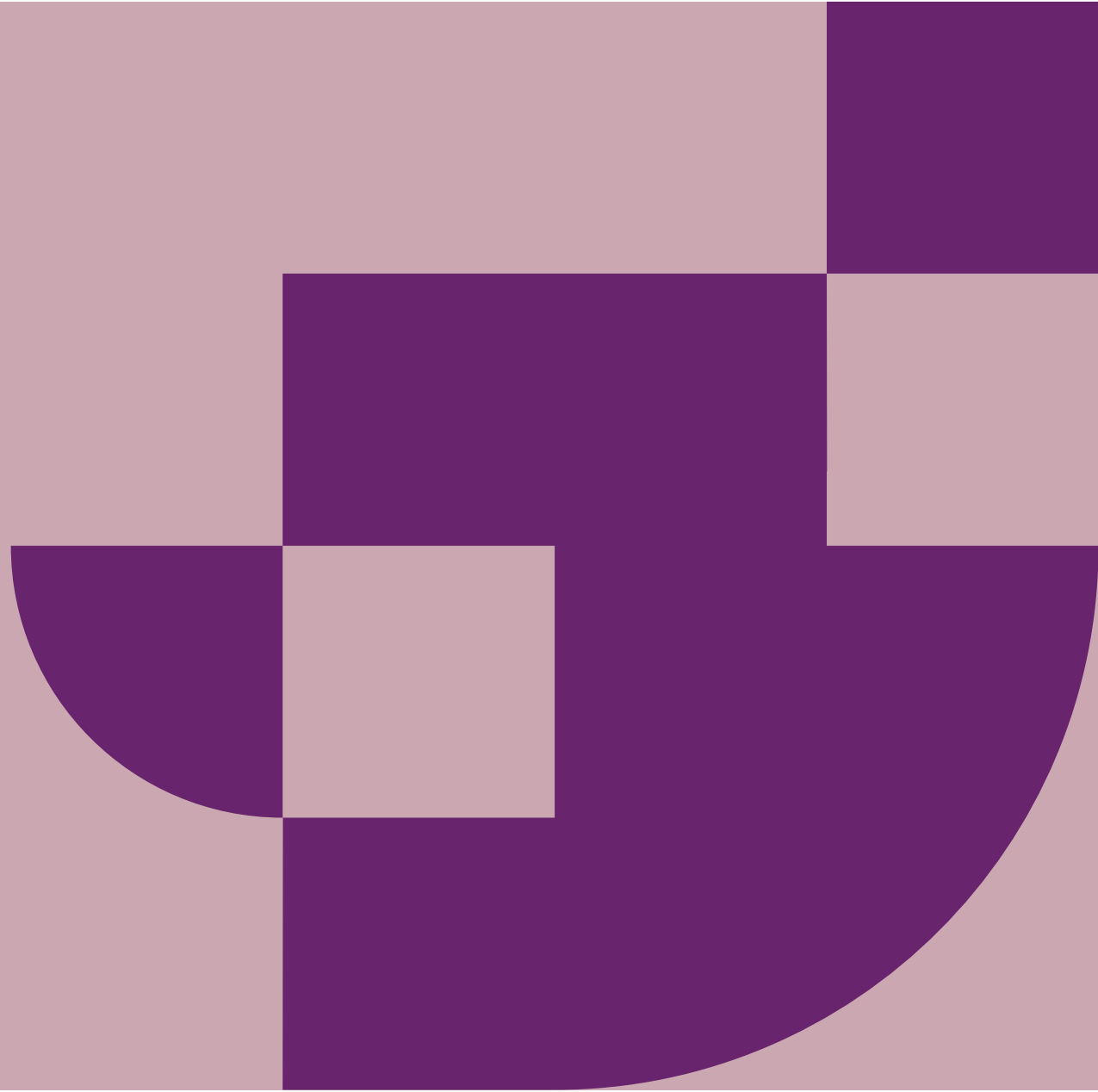
Industry-level trends

- UCAS' 'Journey to a Million' seems to have been overestimated.
- While population rates are important, so is the popularity of HE as a destination.
- Decreasing numbers of 19+ year olds in HE.
- Disparities in HE participation rates between regions.
- Offer and placed rates at high tariff providers are up strongly.
- We've had reference reform - the next big one is personal statement reform.
- Worried about use of AI in personal statements.





Durham-specific developments and patterns



Admissions Trends

- We constantly review our admissions processes and will be considering gathered fields from 2026 entry for our most competitive courses.
- We aim to have decisions made (for on-time applications) by 31 March 2026, to enable offer-holders to attend a post-offer visit day.
- We have reviewed how we use the personal statements.
- We are supporting applicants at confirmation with timely use of confirmation pending reasons going to UCAS.
- Competition for places depends on the subject.



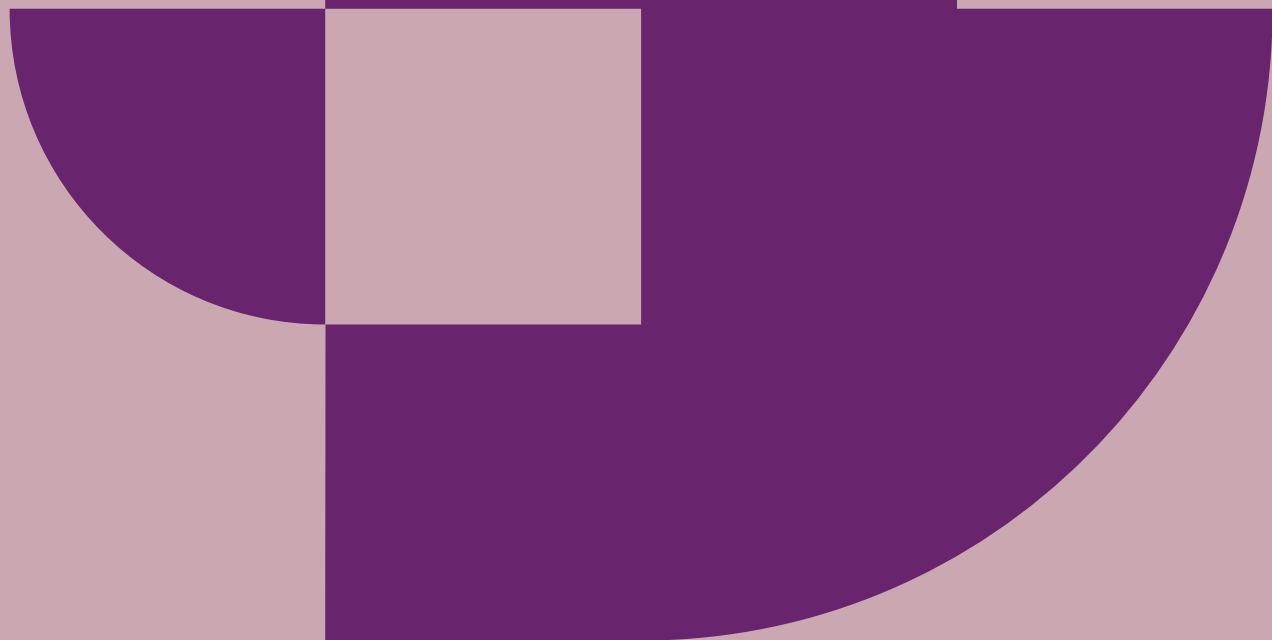
Things to be aware of

- References are particularly helpful when referees add any context about the applicant (that we may need to be aware of).
- College allocation and admissions are separate processes at Durham.
- Inflated predicted grades.
- All applicants who apply by the Equal Consideration Deadline are treated fairly.
- Financial constraints.
- Durham is a small city.





Access: Our objectives



Our objectives

1. To increase the percentage of students studying at Durham University from lower socio-economic backgrounds. To increase the percentage of students studying at Durham University from Black and Asian heritage backgrounds to 3.0% and 7.5%, respectively, by 2028/29.
2. To reduce the continuation and attainment gap between students with a reported disability and students with no reported disability.
3. To reduce the continuation gap between students from low socio-economic groups and their more advantaged peers.
4. To reduce the continuation, completion, and attainment gap between mature students and non-mature students.
5. To reduce the completion and attainment gap between students from Black heritage backgrounds and those from white heritage backgrounds.
6. To limit the attainment gap between students reporting a mental health disability and those not reporting a disability.

Other initiatives

Contextual Offers

A 'contextual offer' is an offer made to applicants who meet certain requirements at the University. If an applicant meets the eligibility criteria for a contextual offer, the grades they need to achieve will be lower than our standard entry requirements.

Currently, to be eligible for a contextual offer you must:

- Be in receipt of free school meals

Or meet two (or more) of the following criteria:

- Your home address postcode is classified as Quintile 1 or 2 of POLAR4 LPN*
- Your home address postcode is classified as ACORN 5 or 6*
- Your current or most recently attended school is classified as a UK state school
- You are care experienced
- You are an estranged student

Financial Support – Durham Undergraduate Bursary Scheme

The Durham Undergraduate Bursary Scheme is a non-repayable bursary for home undergraduate and PGCE students who do not already have an undergraduate degree and whose household income is below a specific threshold as assessed by Student Finance England (or equivalent).

Students get a Durham Undergraduate Bursary in every year of study, if household income remains below the eligibility threshold. This includes years abroad and placement years.

- Less than £30,000: **£2,721**
- £30,000 - £47,200: **£2,720 - £851**
- £47,201 - £62,347: **£714**

Foundation Year

Objective: Provide access to higher education for students with lower attainment by offering a Foundation Year programme.

Wider Student Experience: Ensure these students can engage fully in the university experience, including extracurricular activities, sports, and cultural events.

Enhanced Outreach: Extend targeted outreach in underserved areas to identify and support potential candidates for the Foundation Year.

Impact:

1. Increase access for underrepresented groups, particularly in the North East.
2. Enhance retention and success rates through financial stability and a strong sense of community.
3. Students who study a Foundation year at Durham, on average, perform better than those who join with standard entry requirements.



Thank you