

# University College London (UCL)

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

### What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets out how a university will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

This document provides a summary of the plan, you can also [read UCL's full access and participation plan](#).

### Key points

UCL is the largest on-site provider of education at university level in the UK with around 51,000 students across all levels of study. Entry to undergraduate study at UCL is competitive and 38% of students enter with A levels, or equivalent qualifications, of AAA or higher. In October 2023, UCL was in the top 10 of universities in the English Social Mobility Index. In 2023/24, a third of UK undergraduate students entered through [Access UCL](#), our contextual offer scheme.

Our plan sets out the changes the university will make to support underrepresented students both to apply to UCL, and to achieve as well as all other students in their degree. Using the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register provided by the Office for Students, UCL assessed our performance and identified key areas for improvement. These are:

- The proportion of students from particular socio-economic backgrounds coming to UCL.
- The rate that mature students (students over the age of 21 on the first day of their degree) progress to the second year of study.
- Differences in degree result for students of certain ethnicities and socio-economic groups.

See pages 1-3 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### Fees we charge

At UCL, the maximum fees for UK undergraduate students are:

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

A full list of [UCL course fees](#) is available on the UCL website.

See page 35 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### Financial help available

Financial support for UCL students is detailed in our plan and on the [UCL website](#):

- (i) [UCL Undergraduate Bursary Scheme](#)

To be eligible, students must:

- Be fully registered with the university.
- Be designated Home fee status by UCL.
- Meet the criteria for living in the UK for 3 years before their course starts.
- Have a household income of less than or equal to £42,875.

All eligible students receive the bursary, the amount received depends on household income.

- (ii) [UCL Access Opportunity Scholarship](#)

To be eligible students must:

- Have an immigration status in one of [several specific categories](#), as a result of being a forced migrant, which means they are unable to access student finance (tuition fee or maintenance loan).

Access Opportunity Scholarships are limited to the award of two per year and annual renewal is subject to satisfactory [academic](#) progress.

(iii) [UCL Care Leaver Bursary](#)

To be eligible, students must:

- Be UK domiciled and designated Home fee status by UCL.
- Be aged under 25 on the first day of their course.
- Have been in the care of their local authority for a period of at least 13 weeks before the age of 16.

There is no limit to the number of Care Leaver Bursaries awarded.

(iv) [UCL Estranged Student Bursary](#)

To be eligible, students must:

- Be UK domiciled and designated Home fee status by UCL.
- Be aged under 25 on the first day of their course.
- Have been classified as an independent student on the grounds of estrangement by Student Finance and not eligible for the UCL Care Leaver Bursary.

There is no limit to the number of Estranged Student Bursaries awarded.

(v) [UCL Financial Assistance Fund \(FAF\)](#)

The UK undergraduate element of the FAF supports students who are in unexpected financial hardship. Awards are for living costs only and will vary depending on individual circumstances and availability of funds.

See pages 23-25, 29, and 33-34 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### Information for students

UCL provides prospective and current students with information about the financial support available to them including eligibility criteria, support levels and the method of assessment. This information is available in our online information for prospective and current students and will be signposted at the point of any offer of admission.

See pages 33-34 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### What we are aiming to achieve

Our plan includes the five key areas we want to improve and sets targets for each one:

**Area 1:** A low percentage of students from the most deprived areas studying at UCL.

**Target:** To increase the proportion of IMD quintile 1 students from 11.6% of the UK undergraduate student population to 15% by 2028/29. IMD is the Index of Multiple of Deprivation and is a measure that ranks every small area of the U.K. from most deprived area to least deprived area.

Neighbourhoods in quintile 1 are the most deprived areas.

**Area 2:** A lower rate of mature students progressing to their second year than other students.

**Target:** To reduce the gap between for progression to the second year of study between mature learners over the age of 21 and those under the age of 21 from 8.7 percentage points to 4.5 percentage points by 2028/29.

**Area 3:** A difference in the rate that students from IMD quintile 1 (most deprived areas) and students from IMD quintile 5 (least deprived areas) achieve the highest degree results.

**Target:** To reduce the IMD Q1-Q5 gap in the achievement of 2.1 or 1st degrees from 6.6 percentage points to 3 percentage points by 2028/29.

**Area 4:** A difference in the rate that White students and students of all other ethnic backgrounds achieve the highest degree results.

**Target:** To eliminate the gap in the achievement of 2.1 or 1st degrees between White students and students of other ethnicities by 2028/29.

**Area 5:** A difference in the rate that White students and Black students achieve the highest degree results.

**Target:** To reduce the gap in the achievement of 2.1 or 1st degrees between Black students and White students from 9.3 percentage points to 4.3 percentage points by 2028/29.

See page 4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

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

Our plan outlines the six intervention strategies that UCL will implement to address the risks to equality of opportunity that we have identified:

1. Activity that aims to tackle knowledge and skills gaps in school and college students, including [contextual admissions](#), a school governor network, and attainment raising work.
2. A range of events and activity, including summer schools and taster sessions, that give school and college students information, advice and guidance about university.
3. Changes that help staff to support UCL students more effectively, including training, a role focused on this area in our research centre, and a strategy focused on inclusion.
4. Enabling development of more subject-specific student support in academic departments, including a person in each faculty to lead this area and a fund available for new projects.
5. Greater involvement of UCL students in the co-creation of initiatives and policy, including Student Curriculum Partners, a Student Success Panel and Student Policy Partners.
6. Activity to build inclusion and belonging amongst target groups, including a pre-enrolment programme, bursaries, additional support and a key contact for mature students.

See pages 5-27 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### **How students can get involved**

UCL staff gave a series of presentations about the development of the plan to Students' Union UCL staff and student representatives. Students and their representatives were then invited to discuss and comment on the credibility of UCL's plans to address inequalities.

UCL will evaluate activity co-created with students in collaboration with the students involved in each activity. We will submit regular evaluation reports to the Student Access and Success Committee, whose members, made up of student representatives and senior UCL staff in academic and administrative roles, oversee the development and delivery of the plan. We will hold review meetings with student representatives and the Student Success Panel to provide updates and receive feedback on the progress of the plan.

See pages 30-31 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### **Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved**

UCL uses data to identify areas for improvement and we draw on research and evidence to help us decide the best ways to address these areas. We set out the outcomes we want to see from our projects and activities and set targets to measure success in the short-term and long-term.

We combine different approaches to learn how well our projects are working at making the changes we want to see. These include monitoring data on outcomes, learning individual and majority views from surveys, and interviewing students about their experiences. We review and act on findings so that our programmes are always improving and have as much impact as possible.

Within UCL's management structure, we report regularly to committees on our plan and its evaluation to ensure that the university holds itself to account and makes sufficient progress towards targets. We will also communicate evaluation findings internally across UCL so that successful methods can be used more widely. Externally, we will share our evaluation approaches and learnings through publications on our website, presentations at conferences, and engagement with organisations that work with universities in this area.

See pages 5-27 and 31-33 of the access and participation plan for more information.

### **Contact details for further information**

Please contact the UCL access and participation plan team at [wp.accessucl@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:wp.accessucl@ucl.ac.uk) for further information.