

University Centre Leeds (Luminate Education Group)

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29

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 underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

You can see the current Access and Participation Plan for University Centre Leeds at ucleeds.ac.uk/corporate.

Key points

University Centre Leeds is part of Luminate Education Group (LEG), a collection of education providers based in the Leeds City Region. UC Leeds has been delivering high quality higher education provision since 1997 and is committed to offering vocationally focused, employer-led programmes that meet the needs of the region and our diverse population of students.

To give an indication of our student body, as of 2024:

- 30% are aged 30 and over (60.6% mature, over 21)
- 20.1% have a reported disability
- 93.5% come with BTEC, Access or alternative L3 qualifications rather than A levels
- 67.7% come from the highest areas of deprivation (IMD quintile 1 or 2)
- 50.5% of those under 21 come from the lowest areas of higher education participation (TUNDRA quintile 1 or 2)
- 33.9% were eligible for free school meals

Having reviewed our data, we identified the following targets as the focus of our access and participation plan:

Access

Raise aspirations and support progression to higher education for young people from the least represented groups within higher education who experience intersectional disadvantage by increasing the number of applicants from specific groups including:

PTA_1: Increase applications for care-experienced students by 5% by 2029

PTA_2: Increase applications for estranged students by 5% by 2029

PTA_3: Increase applications for refugees and people seeking sanctuary by 3% by 2029

Continuation

PTS_1: Reduce the continuation gap between disabled students and non-disabled students to less than 1 percentage point by 2029.

Attainment

PTS_2: Reduce the attainment gap between our ethnically diverse students and white students attaining a first class or 2:1 degree by 2 percentage points per annum by 2029.

PTS_3: Reduce the attainment gap between our students from the most deprived socio-economic backgrounds and least deprived socio-economic backgrounds attaining a first class or 2:1 degree by 1 percentage point per annum by 2029.

PTS_4: Reduce the attainment gap between our students under 21 from areas of the lowest participation in higher education and highest participation in higher education attaining a first class or 2:1 degree by 1 percentage point by 2029.

See pages 7-10 of the Access and Participation Plan for more information.

Fees we charge

At UCLeeds, the maximum fees charge in academic year 2024-25 are:

- **£9250 for full time programmes**
- **£6600 for full time foundation year programmes**
- **£4372 for part time programmes**

These fees may vary depending on the course. Typical fees are £8745 for most programmes with the exception of Acting and Production Arts. For September 2024-25, our fees are available through our website and are in line with our published [Fees and Refund Policy](#).

Financial help available

We want to ensure that all students have the opportunity to study for a degree qualification, regardless of background or financial circumstances. Financial support is available through bursaries and paid opportunities, alongside the Higher Education Hardship Fund, which provides emergency financial assistance for students so that they can remain in Higher Education, particularly those students who need financial help to meet extra costs that cannot be met from other sources of support.

Our bursaries are designed to support priority groups and include:

- University Centre Leeds Bursary (for students from low-income households)
- Care Experienced Students Bursary
- Estranged Students Bursary

Information for students

Information is provided to prospective students through our website, prospectus and events including open events, school visits and information sessions. Information includes student-facing policies, fee information and Student Support. Our current students receive information, advice and guidance on fees and financial support through our Student Support, Admissions, Registry and Course teams and also through our virtual learning environment.

See pages 34-35 for more information

What we are aiming to achieve

Through our assessment of performance and staff and student consultation, we identified risks to equality of opportunity for some student groups. To address our key risks, we have produced several objectives and associated intervention strategies. Each objective consists of activities that will support our students who might be facing a risk at different stages of their student journey.

As part of our assessment of performance, aggregate dashboard data for full time undergraduates spanning 4 years were utilised to present an average performance indicator over the period, highlighting variances between the most and least disadvantaged groups. We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our students and have taken this into consideration when setting our commitments to equality of opportunity for our students.

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

In order to achieve the objectives outlined above we have developed intervention strategies with targeted activities intended to enhance the student experience. Activities include:

- A holistic support programme for disabled students including mental health support and help to develop emotional wellbeing
- Targeted marketing and outreach activity and IAG for groups currently least represented in higher education
- A financial literacy programme
- Workshops for students to improve digital literacy, academic skills and enterprise skills through our Digital Innovation Hub.
- A mentoring scheme delivered by Level 6 and 7 students
- Enhanced personal and academic support through investment in support staff embedded within our curriculum teams
- Financial support packages for target groups, including an enhancement to our University Centre Leeds Hardship Fund and Bursary

How we involved our students

When developing our Access and Participation Plan, we worked with our students to identify risks and input into our objectives and intervention strategies. Student Ambassadors and Student Representatives were asked to provide more detailed insight into our risks and proposed intervention strategies through an online forum and survey.

Student Representatives, Ambassadors and Students' Union representatives are integral to our strategic mission and thus we provided appropriate training and support for their roles, so they can provide informed and meaningful contributions.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

University Centre Leeds is committed to understanding whether the interventions we deliver to support our underrepresented students are successful, so we can learn from what works, and amend our approaches accordingly to have maximum impact.

The plan and associated activities will be monitored through our committee structure including our Academic Board and Programme Managers Meeting as well as the Widening Participation Committee, which includes membership from key stakeholders throughout University Centre Leeds, and, moving forward will have student representation.

See pages 30-33 for more information

Contact details for further information

Please contact Laura Macgregor, laura.macgregor@ucl Leeds.ac.uk for more information.

