

# University College Birmingham

## Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

### What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

You can see the full access and participation plan for University College Birmingham at <https://www.ucb.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-regulations/>

### Key points

Our access and participation plan focuses on improving outcomes for specific groups of students. Data shows that, compared to their peers at University College Birmingham, outcomes are lower for certain groups of students. For example:

- Students from a disadvantaged area or from a community where not many people attend university are statistically less likely to complete their studies, especially if they are studying for a Foundation Degree.
- Students who study their course part-time are less likely to achieve a 2:1 classification or above.
- Black and Asian students, particularly those from disadvantaged areas, are statistically less likely to achieve an overall classification of 2:1 or above.
- These groups of students are also less likely to progress to further studies and/or go into highly skilled employment, for example, management and professional jobs.

Overall, outcomes and employability rates for our students have improved. However, we still have further to go.

### Fees we charge

At University College Birmingham, the maximum fees charged for UK students on regulated courses are:

- £9,250 for full-time students, or £11,100 for students on the accelerated degree.
- £6,935 for part-time students.

You can see a full list of fees for courses at University College Birmingham at <https://www.ucb.ac.uk/study/fees-and-funding/>

### Financial help available

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed.

The support includes:

- An annual Kick-Start award of £300 for all eligible students, with an extra £500 if the student's household income is below £25,000. This can be spent on books, equipment, and campus services such as food.
- A laptop or tablet for students studying specific courses.

- A hardship fund to support students who experience financial hardship during their time at university.
- A rent contribution of £275, a starter pack for halls of residence, and a £200 cash payment in the second semester for care leavers.

Eligibility details for all of these forms of financial support are on our website at: <https://www.ucb.ac.uk/student-support/financial-support/higher-education-students/>

## **Information for students**

Potential new students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, and by email communications.

Current students receive information about fees and financial support through the student portal, emails, and Canvas notifications. For the most up-to-date information, see [our university website](#).

## **What we are aiming to achieve**

Our overall aim is to support students to access, and succeed in, higher education. We also want to create an environment where students at University College Birmingham can achieve their full potential.

Based on assessment of our performance, we have identified the following areas of focus:

- Support attainment at school and access to higher education – We are working with local schools to establish the most effective ways for us to do this. Much of this work will be in partnership with other universities, including the University of Warwick. We will run pilot activities in 2022-23, with a fuller programme of work from 2023-24.
- Diversifying our provision – We will expand our higher and degree apprenticeship provision during 2022-23 and 2023-24, and offer more courses at levels 4 and 5, in health, and in engineering and construction.
- Improving the continuation rate (the proportion of students continuing to the next year of their course) for:
  - Students from low participation neighbourhoods by 7%
  - Foundation Degree students from areas of high deprivation by 5%
- Improving attainment of a degree outcome of 2.1 or above for:
  - Students from low participation neighbourhoods from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups by 10%
  - Black students by 19%, and Black African students specifically by 10%
  - Asian students by 10%, and Asian Pakistani students specifically by 10%
- Improving progression to highly skilled employment or further study for:
  - Students from low participation neighbourhoods by 4%
  - Students from areas of high deprivation by 5%
  - BAME students by 6%, and Asian students specifically by 7%
  - Mature students by 3%

## **What we are doing to achieve our aims**

We have identified nine programmes of activity to support achievement of our aims and targets.

1. Extend our programme of work with schools to support more pupils from underrepresented groups to attain good grades and progress to study for a higher education qualification.
2. Offer vocationally-focused and flexible qualifications, including apprenticeships, Higher Technical Qualifications, accelerated degrees and foundation degrees.
3. Adopt a strategic approach to student success and progression through the Student Success and Learning and Teaching Strategies. Both strategies and the group overseeing progress have student input.
4. Develop an inclusivity framework, created jointly with students, focusing on teaching and curriculum design.
5. Provide extra staff training, development and leadership, particularly focused on race equity.
6. Make use of data through Learner Analytics, to provide personalised support for students.
7. Refresh Graduate Advantage, incorporating an extended induction period, and a gradual approach to skills development.
8. Take a coaching, mentoring and goal-setting approach, particularly focused on students' future employment plans and development of relevant academic and professional skills.
9. Offer financial support, including bursaries and hardship funding for eligible students, and practical support for students applying to Student Finance England.

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

We have partnered with the Guild of Students to gain student feedback. This has been used to shape the design of our plan, and this is something we will continue in the future.

Students can provide feedback by either contacting a Guild of Students representative, or by contacting the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Access, Participation and Equal Opportunities) on [a.wilby@ucb.ac.uk](mailto:a.wilby@ucb.ac.uk).

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

We use the best available data and feedback to evaluate:

- The design of our courses
- The immediate impact of the specific activity we do to achieve our aims, such as putting on WelcomeFest and targeted support for some underrepresented groups.
- The long term impact of actions outlined in the section above.
- What impact we have had on creating an inclusive environment where all our students can succeed.

Access, Participation and Equal Opportunities Committee will monitor the progress of our Access and Participation plan and oversee the implementation of the actions within the plan to ensure we are making progress. The committee will report on this to the Student Services and Standards Committee. Student representatives are on these committees.

We will continue monitoring the impact on our target groups to ensure we are to achieve our aims. Where appropriate, we will adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students.

We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our website **by January 2024**.

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

You can contact Alice Wilby on [a.wilby@ucb.ac.uk](mailto:a.wilby@ucb.ac.uk) for further information.