

University of the Arts London (UAL)

Summary of UAL's Access and Participation Plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

What is an Access and Participation Plan?

Our Access and Participation Plan is a document submitted to and approved by the Office for Students. They are the regulator for higher education in England and their job is to protect the interests of students by supporting a diverse and independent higher education sector.

Our Access and Participation Plan sets out how we will improve equality of opportunity for under-represented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. It also makes clear the targeted actions we are taking to improve the outcomes for specific groups of students.

This summary is an introduction to UAL's full [Access and Participation Plan](#).

Key points

At UAL, we are proud of our contribution to creative education. We are focused on:

- giving our students the education they need to flourish in a changing world;
- bringing a high-quality creative education to more students than ever before; and
- changing the world through our creative endeavour.

We have a long history as a force for positive cultural, economic and societal change, and our students and staff believe in their responsibility to drive progress by challenging and rethinking the world around them.

UAL is the largest provider of Art and Design HE in the world, delivering to approximately 22,000 students. Our community is multicultural: 51% of enrolments last year were international students from over 130 countries; 32% of Home undergraduate students were from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic backgrounds. Over 20% of UAL staff are international.

Our mission is to provide transformative creative higher education experiences to improve the life chances of all our students.

We have completed an assessment of performance using our data together with information provided by the Office for Students, and found that the following groups of students are exposed to equality of opportunity risks:

- students from areas with the most deprivation (ie Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Q1-2 areas) - risks relate to access, completion and achievement.
- students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in general and Black students in particular – risks relate to access, completion and achievement.
- disabled students, especially those with mental health conditions and multiple disabilities – risks relate to completion.

Fees we charge

UAL charges the maximum fees. Fees for UK undergraduate students are currently £9,250 for full-time students.

We recognise the importance of providing clear and transparent information to students relating to our fees and the cost of study. We do this in a variety of ways, including:

- Our website
- Our prospectus
- Direct communication with applicants, entrants and enquirers
- Information provided at Open Days, Taster Days and at UCAS events
- In the student contract.

This information is correct at the point of publication but may change each year. For the most up-to-date information, please refer to our university website (www.arts.ac.uk).

Financial help available

UAL has a range of financial support measures in place within its Access and Participation Plan to support students. Here is a list of these measures:

- We offer a [travel bursary](#) for eligible students to travel to the University for open days, tours, interviews, and applicant and offer holder events.
- [Our bursaries](#) are a minimum of £1,400, in each year of study, to Home undergraduate students who receive full state funding support.
- We have a hardship scheme of £1m+ each year for students from low-income backgrounds, to top-up statutory funding as well as to support in urgent and emergency circumstances.

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Information for students

- We provide prospective students with information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days, and by email communications.
- Prospective students from Greater London who meet our eligibility criteria can join our [UAL Insights Outreach programmes](#).
- Our [UK School and College Network](#) team offers a range of opportunities for students such as visits to UAL, online events, subject talks, and workshops.
- We have information to support [care leavers](#) on our website.
- We have a [contextual admissions](#) process which helps us to identify students with the most creative potential, regardless of their personal background or educational experiences.
- We provide current students with information about our fees and the financial support available to them through our student portal, internal communications, campaigns and emails.

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What UAL is aiming to achieve

UAL recognises that it has a responsibility to reduce and eventually eradicate the risks to equality of opportunity described in this summary and set out in detail in our Access and Participation Plan.

We will:

- Ensure there is a whole-organisation approach to the delivery of the Access and Participation Plan to maximise the positive impact for students from target groups across the University.
- Increase the number of students we accept onto our courses from the most deprived parts of the country.
- Increase the number of Black students we accept onto our courses.
- Enable students from the most deprived parts of the country to progress through their studies and complete their programmes successfully.
- Enable students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to progress through their studies and complete their programmes successfully.
- Enable disabled students to progress through their studies and complete their programmes successfully.
- Enable students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds to attain the highest possible degree outcomes.
- Enable students from the most deprived parts of the country to attain the highest possible degree outcomes.
- Support students from all Access and Participation Plan target groups to develop their networks and employability skills to support access to employment in the creative and other industries.

What UAL is doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity

UAL has created a set of interventions that focus on the three stages of the student lifecycle journey: access, on-course and progression. We have also created an additional set of interventions that aim to improve structures and governance enabling access and participation work through a dedicated intervention.

With each of these stages of the student journey, we have used the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (provided by the Office for Students), our own institutional research, evaluation and peer-reviewed evidence to identify the most significant risks.

UAL also examined data provided by the Office for Students Data Dashboard. This included comparisons with our institutional performance and trend data from the last 4 to 5 years with other arts institutions and other higher education providers in London to ensure benchmarking across both geographical and subject trends.

You can read about these interventions in our main [Access and Participation Plan](#).

How students can get involved

As part of its 'Governance, co-ordination, evaluation and student voice' intervention, UAL will implement a new approach to build its internal research and evaluation capabilities and to better co-ordinate access and participation work across the University. This work will build on our existing relationship with its Student Union and will also seek to involve students more systematically in the building of interventions through new approaches to governance and co-ordination.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

UAL introduced a programme of evaluation capacity building and support in 2019/20, informed by Programme Theory Evaluation. This has involved theory of change training, review and approval of evaluation plans, access to ongoing advice, evaluation researchers, access to additional funding for direct costs including paying students and an informal networking group to share process issues and findings. In summary, our evaluation approach is:

- Developing staff capacity to undertake and learn from evaluation and extending evaluation into other areas of UAL practice.
- Increasing knowledge about effective practice.
- Informing changes to practice.
- Enhancing the student experience.
- Evaluating evidence of impact on student outcomes.

Contact details for further information

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