

UK Graduate College
Access and Participation Statement

Policy no.	5.17
Version no.	1
Policy Owner	Managing Director
Date of Last Update	N/A
Date Approved	29/10/2025
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Next Review Date	November 2026
Related Policies	Academic Admissions Policy and Procedure Terms and Conditions
External Reference Points	29 January 2025 UCAS Application Data House of Commons Library HESA

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Purpose.....	2
3.	Scope	2
4.	College Background	2
5.	Alignment with the Colleges Mission Statement, Vision and Core Values.....	2
6.	Target Student Groups.....	3
7.	Our Ambitions	3
8.	Access and Participation Benchmarks	4
9.	Student Admissions	4
10.	Monitoring Access and Participation	4
11.	Concluding Statement.....	5

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Access and Participation Statement (APS) outlines UK Graduate College's commitment to supporting students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds into higher education. Our focus includes mature learners (aged 21+), individuals with disabilities, those from low participation areas (POLAR4 Quintiles 1 & 2), and students from Black, Asian, and White British communities who have historically faced barriers to higher education.
- 1.2 We currently offer functional skills and vocational training (Levels 1–3) and are expanding our provision to include higher education opportunities tailored to these groups.
- 1.3 This APS has been developed using national and localised data to identify potential areas of risk, alongside the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This statement aligns with our mission to deliver inclusive, high-quality education that empowers students from diverse backgrounds to achieve their career goals. Since 2014, we've provided robust Advice, Information, and Guidance (AIG) to help applicants make informed choices.
- 2.2 As part of our application to register with the Office for Students (OfS) under the Approved category, this APS fulfils the requirement to publish a statement rather than a full Access and Participation Plan (APP).

3. Scope

- 3.1 The APS is publicly available on our website and accessible to students via our Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). It will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by regulatory changes or updated guidance.

4. College Background

- 4.1 Founded in 2014, UK Graduate College was established to support adults from disadvantaged communities through education and employment. We focus on mature learners, especially those from Black and Asian communities and low participation areas.
- 4.2 Following early success in London, we expanded to Birmingham. Our next phase includes offering internal progression routes to higher education and attracting new learners seeking career advancement or entrepreneurship.

5. Alignment with the Colleges Mission Statement, Vision and Core Values

- 5.1 Our mission is to improve life chances through holistic education. We value inclusivity, personal development, and clear progression pathways. Our goals include:
 - a) Securing OfS registration
 - b) Partnering with universities to deliver degree programmes
 - c) Gaining approval to offer BTEC HNC/HND qualifications
 - d) Recruiting 300 HE students initially, growing to 1,500 annually by 2029

- 5.2 Our mission is to provide an inclusive, high-quality education, which equips students from diverse backgrounds with the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need to build a successful career. One of the College's core values relates to provision of a caring and nurturing environment, where we seek to value, encourage and develop all of our students and staff as well as our own physical environment and the world around us, with another core value to provide progression opportunities that are clear to students, in an environment that raises students' aspirations to achieve.. This shows our commitment to supporting access and participation in higher education.
- 5.3 We aim to equip students with employability skills through workshops, placements, and practical learning, while supporting their emotional and academic development.

6. Target Student Groups

- 6.1 The College plans to support specific groups of students into higher education, where gaps have been identified in the equality of opportunity. See for example, the Office for Students Equality Impact Assessment (Sep 2018).
- 6.2 Though not exclusively, we plan to specifically target four of the twelve disadvantaged and under-represented groups of students listed in the Office for Students Regulatory Advice 7 (Jul,2018). These include:
- a) Residents of low HE participation areas
 - b) Students from Black, Asian, and other underrepresented ethnicities
 - c) Mature learners
 - d) Carers, particularly those studying Health & Social Care

7. Our Ambitions

- 7.1 We have identified a series of strategic aims to ensure equity in access and participation, as outlined below.
- 7.2 **Access:**
- a) Outreach: To work with our local communities to promote the opportunities to access undergraduate study to mature students
 - b) Recruitment: To ensure the marketing, Information, Advice and Guidance and admissions process actively ensure equity of access onto our courses
 - c) Diversity of Pathways: To provide flexible and alternative pathways to university that will assist with any local skills gap
- 7.3 **Success (On-course)**
- a) Inclusion and Belonging: creating an inclusive learning and teaching environment, meeting individual student needs, providing good academic study skill support, develops a sense of belonging, supports transition and enables students to reach their potential
 - b) Mental Health and Wellbeing: ensuring the College environment supports all students to maintain good mental health and wellbeing, so they actively engage in their studies
 - c) Employer Engagement: developing our employer network to ensure a wide range of placement opportunities and volunteering opportunities, enabling students to apply theoretical learning into practice, deepening their understanding.

7.4 Progression (further study and graduate employment)

- a) Employability: embedding employability into the curriculum will provide students with real life experiences to support progression
- b) Targeted initiatives will be utilised to support students considered less likely to progress to further study or graduate employment
- c) Alumni students will have free access to the IAG team for 12 months post graduation

8. Access and Participation Benchmarks

8.1 As we currently have no HE students enrolled, we rely on national data to guide our strategy. Key insights include:

- a) A decline in mature student applications
- b) Underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in HE
- c) Stable enrolment trends across age, sex, and disability

8.2 Our curriculum will be designed to support mature learners and those returning to education, with pathway programmes to bridge gaps.

9. Student Admissions

9.1 We ensure fair and transparent admissions, guided by our policies and CMA compliance. Applicants receive clear information on:

- a) Course structure and content
- b) Assessment methods
- c) Costs and progression opportunities

9.2 Mature students without formal qualifications can apply based on relevant work experience. Pre-entry academic skills sessions are available to support their transition.

10. Monitoring Access and Participation

10.1 We will monitor recruitment, student experience, and outcomes across the student journey. This includes:

- a) Tracking admissions against targets
- b) The College will conduct an annual gap analysis of student attendance, completion, retention, progression, and continuation rates according to personal and protected characteristics of students including sex, age, and ethnicity. This analysis will inform the annual improvement plan and include interventions to close any attainment gaps identified.
- c) Annual review and approval of the APS by the Academic Board
- d) Reporting to the Board of Governors, through the HE and Pathway Academic Board termly, with student representation included
- e) The Access and Participation Statement will be reviewed and renewed annually as a minimum, or sooner if amendments are required. After its approval by the Academic Board the APS will be uploaded on the College website and VLE.

11. Concluding Statement

UK Graduate College is committed to widening access to higher education for disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. We will:

- Offer multiple entry routes
- Expand and adapt our course offerings
- Make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities
- Continuously improve student outcomes
- Provide robust support services and employability training
- Ensure equal opportunities for appeals and complaints
- Update this statement annually to ensure currency and meet OfS condition A2