

University Centre St Helens (SK College Group)

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 Centre St Helens at [University Centre St Helens Policies and Procedures](#)

Key points

University Centre St Helens (UCSH) aims to:

“Develop an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious, achieve academically, and personally and be able to progress to the best of their abilities.”

The Access and Participation plan (APP) 2021-21 to 2024-25 aims to improve access, attainment and progress for target groups. UCSH identifies the following unrepresented student groups:

- Low-participation e.g. students from areas with historical low participation in Higher Education (HE)
- Low income households.
- Black, Asian and Minority ethnic students
- Mature students e.g. students who were 21 on the 31 August before the start of their course
- Students with a declared disability
- Care leavers

Fees we charge

Fees vary between courses, but UCSH currently charges the following maximum fees

Full-time - £8250

Part-time - £4950

Full details of the fees charged can be found at [University Centre St Helens Policies and Procedures](#). Fees are reviewed on an annual basis.

Financial help available

UCSH provides a Study Enhancement Gift (SEG) to all Year 1 HE students. The current value of the SEG is £400. This is not a cash award but is used to provide a range of benefits including course related resources, IT equipment, software, educational trips, etc.

In addition, the College has a Student Opportunity Fund (SOF) and Student Hardship Fund. This can provide financial support to students in APP target groups (SOF) and students in financial hardship, including course related resources, IT equipment, software, education trips, etc. in addition to the SEG. Students can apply to these funds through the Student Finance Officer and financial support is allocated on a case-by-case basis.

Information for students

Information on fees and financial support can be found on the college intranet, from tutors and the Student Finance Officer.

All applications to the SOF and Hardship Fund are made through the Student Finance Officer.

What we are aiming to achieve

So we can focus the support, we have identified six clear targets for improving access, success and progression

1. Increase UCSH BAME population to equal that found in the local area by 2025.
2. Reduce the gap in access for mature students compared to young students.
3. Reduce the gap in continuation between those from low-participation areas and those from high participation areas.
4. Improve the continuation rates for mature students studying full time
5. Improve attainment for mature students by 9% by 2025
6. Improve progression for disabled students by 10% by 2025

What we are doing to achieve our aims

In order to achieve the aims above, UCSH will carry out the following activities:

Target 1

1. Review the advertising and course information to reduce any perceived barriers for BAME students
2. Provide additional progression sessions, specifically aimed at BAME students;
3. Provide specific progression events for parents/carers

Targets 2 and 3

4. Provide additional support sessions to develop academic reading, writing and research skills
5. Provision of a dedicated HE Learning Mentor for students from POLAR4 Q1 and mature students
6. Provision of additional weekly tutorials and study support sessions for students from POLAR4 Q1 and mature students

Targets 4 and 5

7. Provide additional staff development sessions on teaching strategies for mature students and disabled students
8. Development of communities of practice for staff engaged with mature students and disabled students
9. Provision of specialist support/ equipment for disabled students

How students can get involved

UCSH has embedded a number of opportunities for students to engage with all aspects of the operation of the HE curriculum, including:

- Course representatives/HE Student Forum
- Staff/Student Liaison meetings
- Student representation at HE operational and governance meetings

We will continue to listen to our students to ensure that their views are considered in our planning and delivery of access and participation plan activities.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

The impact of the APP, and the activities identified in it, will be monitored throughout the life of the plan including through feedback from recipients of support, internal evaluation reported through the HE committee structure and via external assurance processes.

Contact details for further information

For further information about the APP contact Jen Hayes, Director of Adult and Higher Education, jhayes@sthelens.ac.uk