University College London

Access and participation pla n

2020-21 to 2024-25

1.1.1.5 Acorn groups LMOPQ

In 2020 UCL undertook research to find the most accurate available measure of socio-economic disadvantage. The research found that, in the absence of free school meals data, the most reliable measure uses Acorn. Acorn is a commercial geodemographic profiling tool, which categorises postcodes into 18 groups, based on a range of public and commercial datasets. Acorn groups L, M, O, P and Q are identified as the most under-represented in higher education.

- L ±Modest Means
- M ±Striving Families
- O ±Young Hardship
- P ±Struggling Estates
- Q ±Difficult Circumstances

1.1.1.6 An analysis of the UCL intake shows a gap in our intake between students from Acorn groups

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1.1.3.2

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

1.2.1 Access

1.2.1.1 The proportion of students from BME

1.2.3 Success: Attainment

1.2.3.1 We observe a gap in the proportion of students gaining good degree for BME students compared to white students (see figure 5

1.3.3 Success: Attainment

1.3.3.1 There is a gap between mature students and their younger peers in degree attainment. The proportion of mature students gaining a 1st or 2.1 is lower than students aged under 21, but the gap has reduced in recent years (see figure 7).

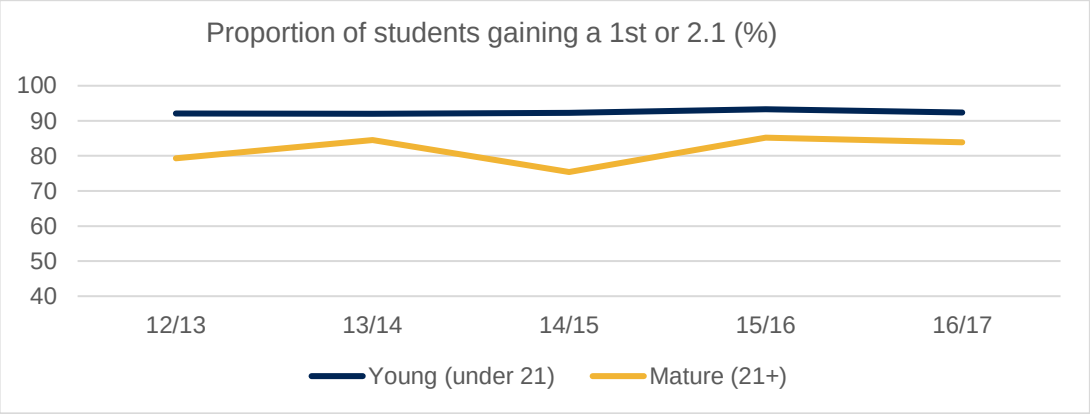

Figure 7 Proportion of students gaining a 1st/2.1 by age

1.3.4 Progression to employment or further study

1.3.4.1 Mature students perform strongly in progression to employment or further study. They progress to graduate level study or employment at significantly higher rates than younger students.

1.4 Disabled students

1.4.1 Access

1.4.1.1 The proportion of students declaring a disability has increased over the last five years, rising from 8.1% in 2013/14 to 11.8% in 2017/18. However, this remains below the sector average of 14.6% in 2017/18. The most common categories of disability are cognitive and learning disabilities (4.2% in 2017/18) and mental health disabilities (3.9% in 2017/18). Each category has seen increases over the past five years.

1.4.2 Success

1.4.2.1 There are no significant differences for disabled students, in any category, compared to those with no known disability in either the continuation rates or the rates of gaining a 1st or 2.1 degree.

1.4.3 Progression to employment or further study

1.4.3.1 There is a gap in the overall proportion of disabled and non-disabled progressing to graduate level employment or study (see figure 8). Analysis of progression by disability category must be treated with caution due to the small numbers in each category. However, the analysis shows no significant differences in any year for cognitive and learning disabilities, multiple impairments or sensory, medical and physical disabilities. However, outcomes for students with mental health disabilities are poorer than students with no known disability. In 2015/16, the progression gap for this group was significant.

1.5

1.5.4 Progression to employment or further study

1.5.4.1 An analysis of career outcomes for care leavers over the last four years shows no significant difference in progression to employment or further study. However as above, this analysis is based on very small numbers of students and must be treated with caution.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

1.6.1 Access

1.6.1.1 There are some differences in access when analysing the intersections of socio-economic background and ethnicity. In the past five years there has been a higher proportion of white students from POLAR Q1-2 compared to BME students from POLAR Q1-2. However, the gap is closing and in the last two years the gap has not been significant.

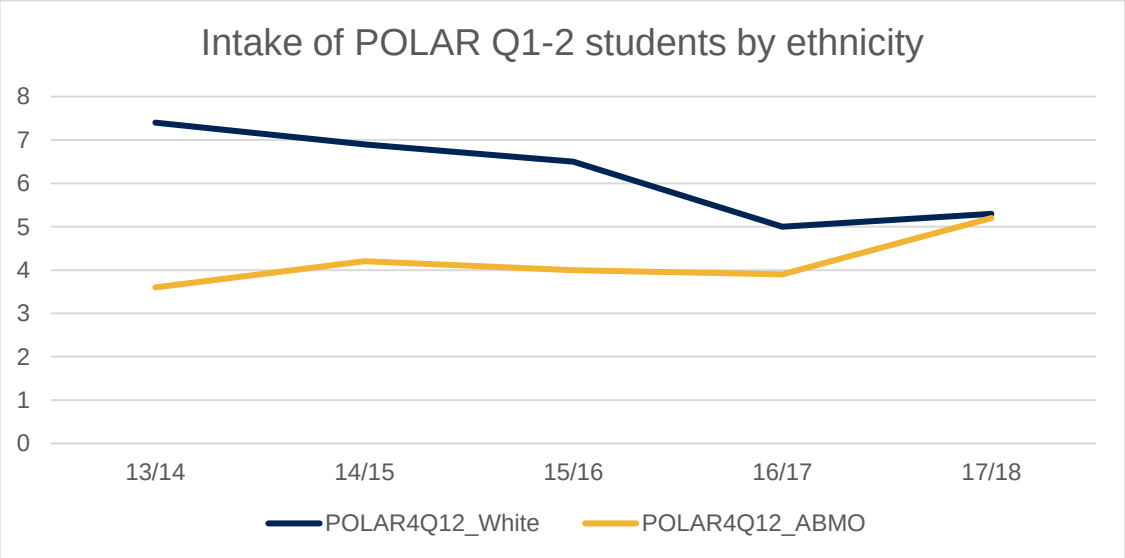

Figure 9 Intake of POLAR Q1-2 students by ethnicity

1.6.1.2 There is a consistently higher proportion of BME IMDQ1-2 students compared to white IMD Q1-2 students over the last five years, and the gap has widened in the last two years.

Figure 10 Intake of IMD Q1-2 students by ethnicity

1.6.1.3 Further analysis is needed to understand whether this is evidence of under-representation of white socially-disadvantaged students, or a reflection of the national or London picture. National statistics suggest that BME ethnicities are over-represented amongst the most deprived neighbourhoods.[6] We draw over 70% of our IMD Q1-2 students from London, and of these London IMD Q1-2 students, 72% are BME. We will be carrying out this analysis in 2020.

1.6.1.4 There is an intake gap in favour of female students across all years (7% points in

1.6.3 Attainment

1.6.3.1 For attainment, we do not observe consistent patterns in significant attainment gaps. Where there are significant gaps between intersectional groups, the gaps reflect overall differences in attainment. For example, BME POLAR Q3-5 students have a lower attainment rate than white POLAR Q3-5 students in 2014/15 and 1016/17. This is reflective of the overall BME attainment gap at UCL.

1.6.3.2 One interesting point to note is that while BME IMD Q1-2 students have a lower attainment rate compared to white IMD Q3-5 students in 2014/15 and 2016/17, there is no significant difference between BME IMDQ1-2 students and white IMD Q1-2 students. This raises questions about the extent to which the BME attainment gap is driven by socio-economic differences amongst students.

1.6.4 Progression

1.6.4.1 There are no significant gaps for progression in any year when we compare the intersections of IMD and POLAR with ethnicity and sex.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

1.7.1 UCL does not currently collect data on other underrepresented groups. However, enhanced data collection at enrolment will be introduced in September 2019 to identify estranged students, forced migrants and students with caring responsibilities. This will enable outcomes for these groups to be monitored.

1.8 Measures

1.8.1 In carrying out this assessment of performance, we are conscious that available socio-economic measures have their limitations. POLAR poses particular challenges for London universities, but other measures have their weaknesses too. In section two, we have chosen to use POLAR as the measure for our access target to reflect the national significance of this measure.

1.8.2 In 2020-21, UCL conducted a review of measures to get a better understanding of the best measures for UCL. The review concluded that, in the absence of free school meals data, the most reliable measure uses Acorn. Acorn is a commercial geodemographic profiling tool, which categorises postcodes into 18 groups, based on a range of public and commercial datasets. Acorn groups L, M, O, P and Q are identified as the most under-represented in higher education.

- x L ±Modest Means
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- x Q ±

2.

2.2.7 We recognise that our target to reduce our POLAR Q1:Q5 ratio to 1:9 does not reflect the

bring in systems to flag up students that data suggests we might want to check in on. Attendance monitoring pilots will begin in 2019/20 and 2020/21, with learner analytics following in 2022/23.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole

inclusive practice. To counter this, we have set-up a task and finish group to look at innovative solutions to access and participation at UCL to effect long term transformation and culture change. The group includes representation from across UCL as well as several of our leading academics in education, attainment and social mobility.

Figure 13 UCL whole provider approach theory of change model

3.1.2.1 The strategic measures that we plan to take to address the gaps in access and

Figure 14 UCL Access theory of change model

3.1.4 Barriers to access: Attainment

3.1.4.1 This is one of the greatest barriers to access at UCL. Analysis of UCAS data shows that there are significant gaps in prior attainment at school by POLAR quintile. While over 5,500 Q5 students achieved AAB, just over 900 did so from Q1 backgrounds. Of all those with AAB grades or better, Q1 students make up less than 6% whilst Q5 students represent 44%. On average, students from POLAR Q1 backgrounds achieve two grades lower at A level compared with their POLAR 5 peers[7]. In order to grow our POLAR Q1 intake to meet our target, we are conscious that we will need to work with schools to raise attainment or consider additional routes into UCL and our entry grade profile. The key strategic measures we have put in place are:

3.1.4.2 Contextual offer scheme : Access UCL launched in September 2018 for students from groups underrepresented at UCL. Eligible students who complete the Access UCL scheme will receive a reduced offer of up to two grades below the standard UCL offer. We expect that up to 100 additional students from underrepresented backgrounds will enter UCL through the scheme in 2019. We have a rigorous evaluation plan for Access UCL, which includes annual evaluation and review of the scheme, assessing the impact on our admissions, and the retention and progression of the students once enrolled.

3.1.4.3 National collaboration: UCL is part of Realising Opportunities (RO), a collaboration of research intensive universities that aims to support the OfS in eliminating the national gap in entry rates at higher-tariff providers between the most and least underrepresented groups. RO also contributes to our own strategic aim to improve access to UCL for students from low participation neighbourhoods and areas of deprivation. The programme is underpinned by robust evaluation, undertaken by independent evaluators, which is a theory of change model using narrative, empirical research and causality evaluation types to evidence impact.

3.1.4.4 Alternative routes in : As part of our new UCL East campus in East London, we are developing foundation programmes which will offer students alternative routes into study. The vision for these new programmes is that at least half of the UK students will be from our target access backgrounds.

3.1.4.5 Support school -level attainment : Since 2009, UCL has been working with schools to run sustained academic support programmes to support attainment and keep students on track to fulfil their potential. We have worked with over 1800 students and teachers, supporting maths, English and critical thinking skills. We are now running randomised controlled trials (RCTs) with partner schools and organisations to gather evidence around the quantitative impact that university intervention can have using small group tutoring and verbal feedback. These RCTs are due to report in 2019 and we have further RCTs planned for 2020. Therefore, at this stage, we are not in a position to set a target around attainment, but we commit to setting one by 2020/21.

[7] 2018 UCAS End of Cycle data showing median attainment at A level is BCC for POLAR Q1 applicants compared with BBB for POLAR Q5 applicants.

3.1.4.6 School sponsorship: Alongside our work with individual target schools, UCL also supports schools at a strategic level. UCL is the sole sponsor of the UCL Academy in Camden, a co-sponsor of Elutec in East London, and a Trustee of the University Schools Trust, which sponsors R R \ D O * U H H Q Z L F K 8 7 & D Q G 6 W 3 D X O ¶ V : D \ in East London. UCL also has strategic partnerships with City and Islington College and Newham Collegiate Sixth Form.

3.1.5 Barriers to access: Information, advice and guidance (IAG)

3.1.5.1 We know that access to high quality IAG can vary by background. Students who are the first in their family to go to university are less likely to have access to the tacit IAG knowledge of their peers[8]. We also know that students applying to UCL from BME backgrounds are more likely to apply for the most competitive subjects when compared with white students[9]. By increasing access to high quality IAG, we hope to increase applications to UCL from the most underrepresented groups. We have been delivering targeted IAG programmes for more than 15 years and we know that around 40% of participants make an application to UCL each year.

3.1.8 Discrete Groups

3.1.8.1 UCL does not currently systematically collect data on all underrepresented groups. However, enhanced data collection

3.1.10 Barriers to success: Health and Wellbeing

3.1.10.1 Wellbeing is personal and multifactorial. This plan sets out to embed a whole-university approach to health and wellbeing so that students can reach their full potential. Our key strategic measures in this area are:

3.1.10.2 Mental health：We benchmark our mental health and crisis provision and are currently one of only three universities to provide 24/7 365 wraparound care. Our Psychological and Counselling Services have seen a year-on-year increase in the demand for their services (up 18% in 20000l05.32 841.92 re W* n BT /F3 10.56 Tf 1 0 0 1 335.47 322.01 Tm 0 g 0 G

recent years we have developed the Being@UCL programme to support students with issues like these, with priority going to students from underrepresented groups

Figure 16 Home region of English IMD Q1/Q5 students

for parents, access to permanent or emergency childcare can limit their interaction with UCL and the extent to which they feel part of the student community. Although we have a nursery at UCL, places are only available on a fulltime basis. To address this, we shall be carrying out a scoping exercis H L Q S D U W Q H U V K L S Z L W K W K H 6 W X G H investigate the feasibility of opening a sessional crèche on campus.

with our admissions offer, with each bursary confirmed via an award email once a place of study has been secured.

3.1.14

3.3.1 Strategic context

3.3.1.1 8&/¶V $FFHVV DQG 3DUWLFLSDWLRQ ZRUN LV XQGHUSLQQHG evaluation. We have a dedicated Research and Evaluation team, which collaborates with academic departments and professional services across UCL. We draw on the research methodological expertise of academic colleagues and are in the process of developing an Access and Participation research network for UCL academics.

3.3.1.2 We collaborate extensively across the sector. We play an active role in national, local and mission group-specific evaluation communities of practice. UCL is also a long-standing member of the HEAT network with representation on its Steering Group, Research Network and Development Group.

3.3.1.3 We have a whole institution approach to evaluation. The Research and Evaluation team provides guidance to departments delivering Access and Participation initiatives across

3.3.3.1 We have a robust and proportionate approach to evaluation design, drawing on quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods as appropriate. We seek to find appropriate comparisons and counter-

3.3.5.2

3.3.6.6 In response to these findings, we plan to leave our bursary rates unchanged from our 2019/20 rates and income bands.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

3.4.1 8&/¶V SHUIRUPDQFH FRQWLQXRXV LPSURYHPHQW DQG FRPSO SDUWLFLSDWLRQ SODQ LV PRQLWRUHG E\ 8&/¶V $FFHVV DQG (APSG) which reports through the committee structure into UCL Council. UCL Council receives regular updates on progress towards delivering the objectives of UCL2034, including access and participation, student support and student success, and education. In addition, the information to support the annual assurance return will include UHIHUHQFH WR SURJUHVV DJDLQVW DFKLHYLQJ 8&/¶V $FFHVV progress worsen, Council will require an action plan from officers which will be closely monitored to ensure UCL remains on track to meet its longer term targets and objectives. 7KLV IUDPHZRUN LV VXSSRUWHG E\ UHJXODU PRQLWRULQJ E\ Student and Registry Services and is overseen by the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).

3.4.2 Students engage with the monitoring and provisions of this plan formally through student union representation on APSG and UCL Council. In addition, we run focus groups with students throughout the year which look at the successes and weaknesses of this plan and our approach. These focus groups explore the current student perspective from Student Ambassadors and Mentors from underrepresented groups, and the prospective student view, working with students on pre-entry programmes and those taking part in care-leaver activities.

3.5 Investment

3.5.1 The investment across the life of this plan is targeted at improving student outcomes and addressing our most significant gaps. A summary of our expenditure is:

Access	£3,263,169	£3,335,090	£3,335,090	£3,335,090	£3,335,090
Research and Evaluation	£501,468	£511,498	£511,498	£511,498	£511,498
Financial support	£8,015,115	£8,114,104	£8,114,104	£8,114,104	£8,114,104

neighbourhoods, and those with no parental experience of HE are more likely to be bursary holders. BME students overall, and black students specifically are also more likely to receive a bursary. Section 3.3.6 outlines our evaluation into the impact of our bursaries.

3.5.4 However, as outlined in section 3, financial support is just one strand of our strategic approach to student success and we have committed an additional £1.7m annually to measures specifically aimed at closing retention and attainment gaps.

4. Provision of i nformation to students

4.1 Clear and transparent information is essential to allow prospective students to make an informed choice. We will give prospective and current students information about the financial support available to them from UCL and from other national sources. Information will include eligibility criteria, support levels and the method of assessment. This information will be available in our online information for prospective and current students. It will also be made explicitly available to students at the point of any offer of admission.

4.2 6 L P L O D U O \ G H W D L O H G L Q I R U P D W L R Q D E R X W 8 & / ¶ V I H H O H Y H before they make their decisions. Information confirming fee levels will be sent to students at the point of any offer of admission.

4.3 This access and participation plan will be available for current and prospective students to view on our website. It will be easily accessible from our online prospectus pages and our pages for undergraduate students.

3.3.5.2

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