University Centre Reaseheath

Summary

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Access and

Participation Plan

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Peter Greenall, Assistant Principal and Dean of Higher Education



What is an Access and Participation Plan (APP)?

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 Reaseheath (UCR) at [https://ucreaseheath.ac.uk/policies.](https://ucreaseheath.ac.uk/policies)

Key Points

Our Access and Participation Plan is focused on improving outcomes for specific groups of students.

Data indicates that, compared to their peers, outcomes are lower for certain groups of UCR students:

* Students from Low Participation Areas (an area where typically fewer people go to university) are less likely than their peers to start a UCR course, continue with their studies from one year to the next, achieve as high a result, or progress into highly-skilled employment.
* Male students from Low Participation Areas are less likely than their peers to start a UCR course.
* Students with a disability are less likely than their peers to continue with their studies from one year to the next, or to achieve as high a result.
* Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) students are less likely than white students to continue with their studies from one year to the next. We also need to know more about the barriers to participation that exist for BAME students in land-based higher education.
* Mature students from the most deprived areas of the country are less likely than their peers to continue with their studies from one year to the next.

See pages 20-21 of the full plan

Fees

The maximum fee for a full-time student at UCR is £9,250 per year.

The maximum fee for a part-time student at UCR is £5,240 per year.

More information on our fees can be found at [Fee-Summary-22-23.pdf (ucreaseheath.ac.uk).](https://ucreaseheath.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Fee-Summary-22-23.pdf)

See page 43 of the full plan

Financial Assistance

UCR offers financial support to all our students, including those from underrepresented groups:

* The Deal: every UCR student (excluding internal top-up students) who is on a directly funded programme and who reports a household income of £25,000 or less is entitled to a £100 support package. This takes the form of £20 print credit and £80 for course materials.
* The Reaseheath Bursary: every UCR student that reports a household income of £25,000 or less is eligible for the Reaseheath Bursary. The bursary is paid in two £450 instalments in February and June.
* Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA): if students want to apply for DSA then they may need a diagnostic assessment. These cost £320 and can be completed at UCR, and students may be eligible for the DAB to help pay £220 towards the cost of the assessment.
* Aspire: this is available to any student who completes a Level 3 programme at Reaseheath College and then moves to a full- or part-time programme at UCR (directly funded full-time home students only). These students receive a £1,000 bursary in their first academic year.
* Student Assistance Fund (SAF): this is designed to alleviate unexpected financial hardship and to provide emergency financial assistance to help students access and remain in higher education. It is targeted at students who need financial help to meet extra costs that cannot be

met from other sources of support, and students who may be considering leaving higher education because of financial problems are particularly encouraged to apply.

* Study Tour Support Fund: this is designed to support students who might struggle to meet the costs of study tours that contribute to academic credit. Students need to report a household income of under £25,000 to be eligible.

See page 40 of the full plan

Information for Students

Prospective students can attend a number of information events and open days throughout the year. There is also the UCR OnDemand video service, where students can get more information about a variety of topics, including accommodation, student life, and graduate testimonials. Applicants that hold an offer from UCR are also invited to a number of Offer Holder days. For more information, see our main Open Days/Offer Holder Days website at [https://ucreaseheath.ac.uk/open-days/.](https://ucreaseheath.ac.uk/open-days/)

Current students can access information about courses, fees, and source of financial support through the UCR website, the StudentHub, and through UCR’s online study-skills portal (the ‘Graduate Toolkit’).

Care leavers can also access information about available support via our Propel.org web-page.

APP Aims

UCR’s Access and Participation activity is ultimately designed to ensure all students can access and succeed in Higher Education, and go on to secure highly-skilled jobs in their chosen sectors. We are currently focussing on the following areas:

* Working closely with local schools to raise young peoples’ awareness, aspiration and attainment so they are better informed and prepared to access and succeed in Higher Education. We have already begun to work with our local UniConnect Hub to reach a more diverse range of students from underrepresented groups.
* Diversifying our provision by exploring degree apprenticeships, Higher Technical

Qualifications and micro-credentials, as well as offering a more diverse range of more typical full-time degree programmes.

* By 2025, increase the proportion of young male entrants from Low Participation Areas to 40%.
* By 2025, eliminate the gap in continuation rates between disabled and non-disabled students.
* By 2025, eliminate the attainment gap between disabled and non-disabled students.
* By 2025, reduce (to 8.8%) the attainment gap between students from the highest and lowest areas of HE participation.
* By 2025, eliminate the continuation gap between BAME and white students.
* By 2025, eliminate the continuation gap between students from the highest and lowest areas of HE participation.
* By 2025, eliminate the continuation gap between mature students from the most and least deprived areas.
* By 2025, to reduce (to 9.6%) the attainment gap between students from the most and least deprived areas.
* By 2025, to reduce the gap in progression rates for students from Low Participation Areas.

See pages 45-46 of the full plan

Achieving Our Aims

We have identified 7 ways to achieve our aims:

* Strengthen UCR’s culture of inclusive practice, particularly through increasing staff training to improve awareness of differential outcomes and the implementation of interventions for disadvantaged groups.
* Identify designated Personal Academic Tutors who can specialise in supporting disadvantaged students.
* Review UCR’s current bursary offer, with a view to re-aligning it towards APP target groups.
* Investigate the potential for the development of new curriculum offers that are attractive to underrepresented groups, and diversify UCR’s existing curriculum offer for the same purpose.
* Review and strengthen Widening Participation (WP) activity directed at groups who are underrepresented in our student population.
* Develop an online portal (the ‘Graduate Toolkit’) to support the development of graduate skills, attributes and characteristics.
* Review and enhance our wider model of support for disabled students.

See pages 25-35 of the full plan

Involving Students

UCR students can discuss Access and Participation issues with their Course Representatives. These Representatives attend UCR’s regular Staff Student Partnership Forum (SSPF), and can therefore raise any APP issues in that space. We also have student representation on all of our major deliberative committees at UCR, notably including our APP Steering Group.

UCR also has a dedicated APP MS Teams page (the UCR Access and Participation Working Group), and employs a bespoke APP Coordinator who is directly contactable by students. Students are further asked to submit an APP monitoring return when requested to do so by the Office for Students (OfS).

See pages 35-36 of the full plan

Evaluation

Evaluation means examining our activities to determine whether what we are doing is working. Once we know whether what we’re doing is working or not, we can share this with other organisations so that everyone can do more. Our Access and Participation work is informed by:

* External research, including studies by other organisations and universities.
* Evidence we have collected (for example from surveys, student feedback and college data).
* Evidence from Graduate Outcomes (how well our students do and where they go to next).

We share this information internally. However, we will also share this externally through an Impact Report, which we plan to put on our website. We will also continue to discuss and plan further activities at our APP Steering Group and other committees. The Steering Group will also report our progress to our HE Academic Board, which oversees the implementation of our actions and measures progress against the annual milestones set out in our APP. We will continue to monitor impact on our target groups and, where appropriate, adjust our interventions in the best interests of our students.

See pages 36-37 of the full plan

Contact Details

Contact UCR’s APP Coordinator (Christopher Buckle) on christopherb@reaseheath.ac.uk for more information.