

UCR

University Centre Reaseheath

Summary of 2025-29 Access and Participation Plan

UKPRN: 10005404

Reaseheath College,

Reaseheath,

Nantwich,

Cheshire,

CW5 6DF

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education. They detail the intervention strategies that providers will put in place to address risks to equality of opportunity over a four year period, and how they will measure and evaluate their impact. You can see the full Access and Participation Plan for University Centre Reaseheath on [the policies page of our website](#).

Key points

University Centre Reaseheath (UCR) is one of the UK's leading specialist providers of Higher Education in agriculture, conservation, animal management, equine, sport, and food science. Reaseheath College has been delivering Higher Education for over 30 years.

Our 2025-29 Access and Participation Plan focusses on several key groups across the student lifecycle. We aim to improve access to higher education, but also want to improve student success measures, such as completion of study programmes and achievement levels. A major focus of our 2025-29 Access and Participation Plan is progression to highly skilled, graduate level employment, particularly for students in underrepresented groups.

Through our assessment of performance, we identified risks to equality of opportunity for:

- Students who received **Free School Meals** at school (Access)
- **Male** students from areas of **low participation in HE** and the **most deprived areas** (Access)
- Students who declare a **disability** (Success/Progression)
- **Female** students from areas of **low participation in HE** and more **deprived areas** (Success/Progression)
- **Young** students (those younger than 21 when they enrol at UCR) (Progression)

See pages 4-6 of the access and participation plan for more information

Fees we charge

The maximum fee for full time students at UCR is **£9250 per year (£9535 from 2025/26)**

The maximum fee for part-time students at UCR is **£6935 per year (£7145 from 2025/26)**

In line with the recent UK Government announcement, undergraduate tuition fees will rise to the amounts outlined above in the 2025/26 academic year. These changes will apply from the 1st of August 2025 and will be reviewed annually.

Our UCR Student Tuition Fee Information can be found on [the policies page of our website](#).

See page 71 of the access and participation plan for more information

Financial help available

University Centre Reaseheath is committed to providing additional financial support to those who need it. Our bursary schemes detailed below are designed to ensure that students can access, thrive and succeed in Higher Education at UCR. Additional financial support is available to eligible students.

The Deal at Reaseheath and The Reaseheath Bursary

The Deal at Reaseheath, and the Reaseheath Bursary, are designed specifically to support students who come to us from a household where the total income is £25,000 a year or less.

The bursary is worth £900 per year, for up to 3 years of study. There is also a £100 package of course materials available to Level 4 students. Eligible students must maintain a 90% attendance average to receive their bursary payments.

Diagnostic Assistance Bursary (DAB)

The Diagnostic Assistance Bursary can offer a contribution towards a diagnostic assessment when booked through UCR, enabling students to access the Disabled Students' Allowance.

Aspire

The Aspire bursary is available to all students who progress from a level 3 qualification at Reaseheath College in the previous year, including those students on the Reaseheath Access to HE level 3 course, providing that a minimum attendance level of 90% is maintained. The Aspire bursary of £1,000 is paid in instalments of £500 in February and June.

Student Assistance Fund (SAF)

The Student Assistance Fund provides discretionary financial assistance to support students who are facing financial hardship, which may prevent them from continuing with their studies. Awards from the fund are usually £300 or less.

Study Tour Support Fund

The Study Tour Support Fund is available to students with a household income of £25,000 or under, and can therefore support those who otherwise would struggle to meet the costs. The fund does not cover the full study tour cost, but a percentage based on the number of applicants in any given year.

See pages 35-37 of the access and participation plan for more information

Information for students

Financial support and fee information for current and prospective students can be found on our [student finance web page](#).

We provide a wealth of information to our current and prospective students through our physical prospectus (available at [the UCR prospectus web page](#)), or by viewing our [UCR website](#). We also have in-person and virtual open days and offer holder events. Our [open days at UCR web page](#) has the most up to date information.

See page 35 of the access and participation plan for more information

What we are aiming to achieve

To address the risks to equality of opportunity identified in our assessment of performance, we have included the following targets in our Access and Participation Plan. We aim to:

- Increase the proportion of entrants to HE courses who were eligible for Free School Meals¹ at Key Stage 4 to 20.0% by 2029 (Access)
- Increase the proportion of entrants to HE courses from male students originating from the areas of lowest HE participation by 2029, such that 15.5% of our entrants are male and from POLAR² quintiles 1 and 2 (Access)
- Increase the proportion of entrants to HE courses from male students originating from the most deprived areas, according to the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD³), by 2029, such that 17.0% of our entrants are male and from IMD quintiles 1 and 2 (Access)

¹ Free School Meals (FSM) are often available to low income households who receive certain benefits

² POLAR stands for Participation of Local Areas and is a measure of the proportion of young people who enter higher education in an area, split into 5 groups or quintiles

³ Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) measure the relative deprivation of small areas, split into 5 groups or quintiles

- Increase the completion rates of female students from the most deprived areas (IMD quintiles 1 and 2, currently 69.6%) to 80% by 2029 (Success)
- Increase the attainment rates (i.e. the number of students who gain a 1st class or 2:1 degree classification) of disabled students to the pre pandemic level of 60% by 2029 (Success)
- Increase the attainment rate of females from low participation areas (POLAR quintiles 1 and 2) to 50% by 2029 (Success)
- Increase the attainment rate of females from the most deprived areas (IMD quintiles 1 and 2) to 65% by 2029 (Success)
- Reduce the gap in progression rates to highly skilled, graduate level employment for disabled students to 7.0% (Progression)
- Increase the progression rates for “young” students to 30% by 2029 (Progression)
- Increase the progression rates for females from the most deprived areas (IMD quintiles 1 and 2) to 26.8% by 2029 (Progression)

See pages 7-10 of the access and participation plan for more information

What we are doing to address keys risks to equality of opportunity

UCR has identified 4 main areas of work (Intervention Strategies) to address the risks to equality of opportunity we have identified in our assessment of performance:

Intervention Strategy 1 – Improving access to Higher Education for underrepresented groups

This involves outreach work with schools, as well as our FE students at Reaseheath College. We are planning better support and more advice for students who want to progress into HE from our college provision. We will make our curriculum offer more diverse and review our admissions policy and marketing to make it easier to access HE at UCR.

Intervention Strategy 2 – Improving attainment rates for disabled students

This involves work on our data, so we better understand where and when we need to support certain students. We are planning more work around our successful Early Access programme, which supports students with their transition to HE. We are planning more academic support, particularly around dissertations, and will ensure that students can access academic coaching, disability specific support and personal academic tutoring.

Intervention Strategy 3 – Improving completion and attainment rates for female students from areas of low HE participation and the most deprived areas

This involves supporting students to improve their academic knowledge and skills, as well as soft skills by providing additional support and refining our approach to Personal Academic Tutoring. We will strengthen our approach to mental health support, as well as ensuring our financial support offer is meeting the needs of the students who need it the most.

Intervention Strategy 4 – Improving progression outcomes for students with a disability, young students and students from the most deprived areas

This involves the launch, roll out and evaluation of our new Future Focus strategy, which aims to ensure students have the right support to progress from UCR into highly skilled, graduate jobs, and that those who currently experience a risk to equality of opportunity are more likely to experience good progression outcomes.

See pages 11-27 of the access and participation plan for more information

How students can get involved

Students are able to get involved in the planning, monitoring, evaluation and delivery of our access and participation work at UCR. The student body, including our active Student Union were involved throughout the creation of our Access and Participation Plan, and submitted an independent student submission to the Office for Students alongside our main plan.

Current students can get involved in our access and participation work in a number of ways:

- By joining the Student Council
- By Joining our Access and Participation Steering Group, or providing feedback and comments to our Student Union President
- Using the Tell UCR feedback form
- Providing feedback through surveys or student focus groups when asked
- By contacting the [Access and Participation Coordinator](#)

See pages 29-30 of the access and participation plan for more information

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Our 2025-29 Access and Participation Plan has been informed by the latest sector research, to ensure that our interventions are more likely to have the impact that we want to see. Evidence of this can be seen in the “references” section of our plan (Pages 62-65)

Evaluation is an important part of our Access and Participation Plan. It will help us, and others to understand what works and, just as importantly, what doesn't. Each of our Intervention Strategies has an evaluation plan, which outlines the research questions and data collection plans for each intervention. This will allow us to collect Type 1 (narrative) and Type 2 (empirical) evidence.

We will share our interim findings internally, through our Access and Participation Steering Group, but also publish our findings each year through our annual scholarship and research journal, before producing a final evaluation impact report towards the end of our 4 year Plan. This will be shared through a future evaluation repository.

See pages 31-34 of the access and participation plan for more information

Contact details for further information

For further information about our access and participation work, or any aspect of our Access and Participation Plan, please contact:

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