

Writtle University College (WUC)

Summary of 2022-23 to 2026-27 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 Writtle University College (WUC) at <https://writtle.ac.uk/HE-Regulations-&-Policies>.

Key points

WUC is a small higher education institution (with approximately 800 students studying at higher levels) located in Chelmsford, Essex. We specialise in land-based, design and sport courses at various levels of study including Postgraduate, Undergraduate, Further Education, Short Courses and Apprenticeships. We aim to deliver a range of specialist and practical subjects that equip our students to contribute to the challenges facing the UK's land-based industries. Our vision is to combine specialist facilities and professional working environments with an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment. WUC's Access and Participation Plan focuses on activities to improve access, success on course and progression into employment or post-graduate study for the following student groups:

- Students from areas of the country where participation in higher education is low (postcode data is used to assess this)
- Students from socio-economically deprived areas (postcode data is used to assess this)
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic students
- Disabled students
- Mature students (age 21 and over)

We have identified activities to support each of these groups and targets we would like to achieve for each group. Details are on pages 14-15 of our full [Access and Participation Plan](#).

Fees we charge

Our maximum fees are set at £9,250 per year for all our full-time courses, and £6,935 per year for our part-time courses. Full fee information is available at <https://writtle.ac.uk/Finances>

Financial help available

We provide the following bursaries:

- WUC bursary (£400 per year) for students with a household income of £25,000 or less.
- WUC bursary (£650 per year) for students with a household income of £25,000 or less **and** who are from areas of the country where participation in higher education is low.
- Care experienced student bursary (£1,000 per year) for students who have lived in care.
- Mature (21 and over) students (£1,000 per year) to support mature students who are from the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas of the country.
- WUC students who have achieved a 1st or 2:1 degree outcome who are going to study a post-graduate course at WUC (£1,000 one-off payment).
- WUC students who have achieved a 1st or 2:1 degree outcome who are going to study a post-graduate course at WUC **and** who are from areas of the country where participation in higher education is low (£1,500 one-off payment).

Finally, we provide funding to support students to access diagnostic assessments for specific learning disabilities (covering full cost of assessment), and we have a fund available (by application) to support students experiencing financial disadvantage. Full eligibility, terms and

conditions, and details of all scholarship funds can be found at <https://writtle.ac.uk/Scholarships-&-Bursaries> and on pages 28-29 of our Access and Participation Plan.

Information for students

Information about our courses, application process, student funding and student support is available through our website at <https://writtle.ac.uk>. We also publish this information through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), the Student Loans Company and through our publications and social media channels.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our mission is to produce leaders in the land-based industries and help our students graduate into successful careers by 'putting science into practice'. We are committed to maintaining our excellent record in teaching and learning by ensuring there is equality of opportunity for all, in an environment of respect. Based on our assessment of our current performance, we are focussing on:

- Reaching, working with and facilitating access opportunities
- Placing career and employability outcomes as a focus within our curriculum and ensuring our curriculum is inclusive, as means to close gaps in attainment and degree outcomes
- Ensuring students are supported holistically beyond the curriculum

We want to build our evaluation and analysis activity to deepen our understanding about our target groups and their experiences, and respond well to their needs. Our specific APP targets are summarised below and full details are provided in our APP 2022-23 to 2026-27 variations document.

Access targets	1. To decrease the gap in participation between IMD Quintile 1 and IMD Quintile 5 entrants, from 18.8% in 2019-20, to 10.0% by 2026-27.
	2. To increase the proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic entrants, from 3-year average 6.6% (2017-18 to 2019-20) to 12.7% by 2026-27 (3-year average 2024-25 to 2026-27).
Success targets	3. To reduce the gap between mature (21 and over) and young (under 21) learners to 5% by 2026-27 from baseline of 14.5% in 2018-19, and thereafter eliminate the gap by 2030-31.
	4. To reduce the gap between IMD Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1s) from a 3-year average baseline of 25.6% (2017-18 to 2019-20), to 14.5% by 2026-27 (3-year average 2024-25 to 2026-27).
	5. To reduce the gap between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and Quintile 5 attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1s) from a 3-year average baseline of 22% (2017-18 to 2019-20), to 10.9% by 2026-27 (3-year average 2024-25 to 2026-27).
	6. To reduce the gap in attainment outcomes (1st or 2:1s) between disabled and non-disabled students from a 3-year average baseline of 13.1% (2017-18 to 2019-20), to 5% by 2026-27 (3-year average 2024-25 to 2026-27).
Progression targets	The University College has not set progression targets for the 2022-23 to 2026-27 APP, given the very limited data available from the new Graduate Outcomes (GO) measure, very small cohorts, and our historical performance based on the DLHE data, which revealed no statistically significant gaps. Should robust trends and gaps emerge as depth and integrity of the base data increases, the University College will seek to set additional targets agreed with OfS

What we are doing to achieve our aims

We have four strategic areas, which detail activities we do to achieve our aims. Activity includes:

For potential students, schools, colleges and community

We have a range of outreach activities that help our potential students think about and experience university life and learning including:

- Partnerships with schools and colleges

- Range of taster activities and resources linked to school curriculum, summer school, campus visits and virtual events.
- Partnership working with key community organisations and charities
- Promoting the achievements of our minority ethnic students and staff as role models
- Sending current students as ambassadors to work with potential students
- Making sure our website is accessible and improving the usability of the site

Further information about our activities, including how to get involved, is available at <https://writtle.ac.uk/Outreach-Programme> and <https://www.wuc-outreachhub.co.uk/>

For current students

We deliver activity that provides academic and broader support and development, including:

- Offering foundation courses and part-time study options
- Developing our 'inclusive curriculum', making sure learning and teaching is accessible and represents diversity.
- Involving students in training academics and increasing the diversity of our staff
- Peer-to-peer and 'near-to-peer' support across our student population
- Embedding graduate success within the curriculum
- Improving support for our disabled, disadvantaged and under-represented students
- Wellbeing services, including counselling, a 24/7 helpline, wellbeing, residential and mental health support, chaplaincy and learning mentors.
- Information and advice in communications, such as our Study Skills e-Newsletter
- Attainment raising workshops and writing retreats
- WUC Ambassador Intern programme, providing opportunities for paid work on campus
- Our 'Steps to Success' programme addressing barriers to employment faced by students with a declared disability.

How students can get involved

Students can get involved in our access and participation work in a number of ways, and are represented across the governance framework including our Access and Participation Group, Academic Board and Board of Governors. Our Student Union (SU) is involved in a range of work and key decision making meetings, and consult with the wider student body through campaigns, focus groups and surveys. HE Student Council meets monthly to discuss topics that impact students, and to enable key issues to be escalated to Senior Leadership Team. In addition, students can help inform and shape the work of our Student Success Team through the Student Success Advisory Board (SSAB).

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Our small size means our evaluation needs to include qualitative evaluation and research (including case studies) to deepen our understanding of the experiences of students from different target groups. We use 'theory of change' models to help evaluate our activities, which helps identify how our activities work and how we can measure impact, as well as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and staff reflections. Evaluation findings and data across the student lifecycle are analysed regularly to inform and improve our practices.

We are supported in evaluation by external specialists through our membership of [Specialist Evidence Evaluation and Research \(SEER\)](#), who conduct research and evaluation on our behalf. Our evaluation strategy is detailed on pages 33-36 of our full Access and Participation Plan.

Contact details for further information

For more information or to ask any questions about our Access and Participation Plan, you can contact enquire@writtle.ac.uk