

University College of Estate Management (UCEM)

Access and Participation Plan

2020/21 to 2024/25

1. Assessment of performance

University College of Estate Management (UCEM) is the leading provider of supported online education solely for the built environment, with 100 years' experience of providing learning opportunities of the highest quality. UCEM was founded in 1919 and incorporated by Royal Charter (RC000125) on 22nd August 1922 and has been a registered independent charitable institution in England and Wales since 24 May 1963.

UCEM is committed to delivering courses that are accessible to all students, regardless of age, location, or protected characteristics, as well as to enhancing and supporting the longer-term employability of its graduates. The institution provides educational courses from FHEQ Level 3 to Level 7. UCEM currently has approximately 4,000 students worldwide, and the average age of its current students on entry is 29. As will be seen from the analysis below, the numbers of students in under-represented groups are very small, and significantly limit statistical analysis in some cases.

The majority of UCEM students apply directly to UCEM, with less than 1% of all students applying through UCAS and none enrolled through this application route in 2018/19. For this reason, UCEM currently holds only a limited amount of external data on students. UCEM opted to take part in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Year Three award in January 2019. As at June 2019, UCEM was eligible to receive a provisional TEF award as a result of completing the HESA Alternative Provider Return since 2015/16.

To assess the access and participation performance of UCEM, several datasets have been analysed as follows:

Office for Students (OfS) Access and Participation Dashboard¹: the resource provided three years' worth of UCEM data (2015/16 – 2017/18) from HESA returns and data from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey. Approximately two-thirds of UCEM students are returned in the HESA Return (the remainder are internationally-based or on a Level 3 apprenticeship course).

UCEM apprenticeship students are incorporated in the 'part-time' dataset rather than the 'full-time or apprenticeship' dataset because, as has been discussed with OfS, these students were not identified in a source field within the UCEM HESA Returns. The 'full-time or apprenticeship' dataset does not therefore include UCEM apprenticeship students, and includes students studying on a full-time BSc and students on Foundation Degree courses. The 'part-time' dataset includes those studying a BSc (non-apprenticeship) part-time and, in 2016/17 and 2017/18, students on a BSc apprenticeship (none of the students returned to HESA in 2015/16 were on an apprenticeship programme). None of UCEM's BSc apprenticeship students have to date completed their studies, which means that all attainment and progression rates shown exclude apprenticeship students. The only rates that UCEM's apprenticeship students impact are in relation to access and non-continuation (and limited to 'part-time'). It is not possible for institutions to rebuild non-continuation rates using the data from OfS, but we have calculated the access rates on our part-time courses when excluding apprenticeship students.

The data from this resource is presented in a series of tables. Not available ('n/a') is shown where the figure is suppressed in order to prevent the disclosure of sensitive data. Both the 'number of students' and 'proportion' shown in the tables represent rounded figures. 'Number of students' in the tables relating to access represents the number of those that originally registered, in the tables relating to non-continuation represents the number of students that have not discontinued, in the tables relating to attainment represents the number of students achieving at least an upper second-class classification, and in the tables relating to progression relates to the number in employment or further study. Insufficient numbers of students means that disaggregating the data by different ethnic groups and disability types was not feasible.

Publicly available HESA data: used to benchmark UCEM current position against comparable sector courses (focus on the architecture, building and planning subjects of study).

¹ www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/access-and-participation-data-dashboard/

In understanding progress in this area, it is important to recognise that UCEM only begins the delivery of its first Access and Participation Plan in 2019/20, and from September 2019 will be monitoring progress over time from the commencement of this Plan.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socio-economic status

1.1.1 Access

Table 1: Socio-economic background of UCEM new undergraduate student starters (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion of students	Number of students	Proportion of students	Number of students	Proportion of students
Full-time						
IMD quintile 1	30	11	20	11	10	9
IMD quintile 5	50	20	50	23	40	27
POLAR4 quintile 1-2	10	15	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
POLAR4 quintile 4-5	30	75	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Part-time						
IMD quintile 1	20	8	30	12	30	7
IMD quintile 5	60	25	70	30	130	30
POLAR4 quintile 1-2	0	15	10	15	40	23
POLAR4 quintile 4-5	20	65	40	70	100	53

As shown in Table 1 above, across all three years approximately a tenth of UCEM full-time starters were from the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile 1, which is a lower rate than the wider sector (consistently c.21%). The rate of UCEM new full-time students in IMD quintile 1 has decreased from 11% in 2015/16 and 2016/17 to 9% in 2017/18. In 2017/18 the gap between entrants from quintile 1 and quintile 5 was 18 percentage points (which is used as the baseline in Table 2a in Section 5).

POLAR4 data for UCEM full-time students is only available for year 2015/16 and shows that 15% of new full-time students came from areas in quintiles 1-2, which was 60 percentage points lower than the proportion from quintiles 4-5 (this figure is used as the baseline in Table 2a in Section 5). The sector rate of new full-time students from POLAR4 quintiles 1-2 in 2015/16 was 27.4%.

The proportion of UCEM part-time entrants from IMD quintile 1 has ranged between 7% and 12% over the three years of data, with the proportion from quintile 5 increasing from 25% in 2015/16 to 30% in both 2016/17 and 2017/18. The proportion from IMD quintile 1 in 2017/18 was approximately 12 percentage points lower than that of the wider sector. In both 2015/16 and 2016/17, 15% of UCEM part-time entrants were from areas in POLAR4 quintiles 1-2. The proportion increased to 23% in 2017/18, but was still below the sector rate of 38%.

When excluding UCEM's apprenticeship students:

- the proportion of UCEM part-time new starters from IMD quintile 1 in 2016/17 remains unchanged but the proportion from quintile 5 decreases to 26%, whilst in 2017/18 the proportion from quintile 1 increases to 8% and the proportion from quintile 5 decreases to 28%. This represents a gap in 2017/18 between quintile 1 and quintile 5 of 20 percentage points (which is used as the baseline in Table 2a in Section 5); and
- the proportion of UCEM part-time new starters from POLAR4 quintiles 1-2 and quintiles 4-5 remains unchanged in 2016/17, whilst the proportion from quintiles 1-2 increases to 30% and the proportion from quintiles 4-5 decreases to 50% in 2017/18. This represents a gap in 2017/18 between quintiles 1-2 and quintiles 4-5 of 20 percentage points (which is used as the baseline in Table 2a in Section 5).

1.1.2 Success

Non-continuation

Table 2: UCEM undergraduate continuation rates by socio-economic background (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Number of students	Proportion of cohort	Number of students	Proportion of cohort
Full-time				
IMD quintile 1	20	80	n/a	n/a
IMD quintile 5	40	90	40	80
IMD quintile 1-2	70	83%	50	80%
IMD quintile 3-5	140	82%	110	79%
POLAR4 quintile 1-2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
POLAR4 quintile 3-5	30	85%	n/a	n/a
POLAR4 quintile 1-4	20	80%	n/a	n/a
POLAR4 quintile 2-5	40	85%	n/a	n/a
Part-time				
IMD quintile 1-2	50	75%		
IMD quintile 3-5	130	73%		
POLAR4 quintile 1-2	n/a	n/a		
POLAR4 quintile 3-5	n/a	n/a		
POLAR4 quintile 1-4	n/a	n/a		
POLAR4 quintile 2-5	20	85%		

The data in Table 2 above identifies a 10 percentage point gap between non-continuation amongst UCEM full-time students from IMD quintile 1 and IMD quintile 5. Further data (suppressed and therefore not presented in Table 2 above) is available showing that this gap had closed to 7.7 percentage points in 2016/17. Limited data means a comparison is only possible between POLAR4 quintiles 1-4 and quintiles 2-5. The rate of non-continuation is lower amongst UCEM full-time students from quintiles 2-5 (15%) than amongst UCEM full-time students from quintiles 1-4 (20%).

Rates of non-continuation amongst UCEM part-time students are largely consistent when comparing IMD quintiles 1-2 and quintiles 3-5. In 2015/16, the lowest continuation rate for UCEM (69% for quintile 5) is higher than the highest equivalent sector continuation rate (68.4% quintile 5). The sector rate of non-continuation decreases as the IMD quintile number increases. A similar trend is not as evident amongst UCEM students, although this may simply be a consequence of the small population. Insufficient data means a comparison by POLAR4 is not possible.

Attainment

Table 3: UCEM undergraduate attainment rates by socio-economic background (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Part-time						
IMD quintile 1-2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	70%
IMD quintile 3-5	40	53%	40	63%	50	51%
IMD quintile 1-4	30	58%	40	60%	50	56%
IMD quintile 2-5	50	57%	50	60%	60	56%

Due to limited data, the only rates available from the OfS dashboard are for UCEM part-time students. The only comparison possible for years 2015/16 and 2016/17 is between IMD quintiles 1-4 and quintiles 2-5, which, as shown in Table 3 above, reveals little variance in the attainment rate, with rates of 58% for the former and 57% for the latter in 2015/16, a rate of 60% for both in 2016/17 and a rate of 56% for both in 2017/18. Data for 2017/18 shows that the attainment rate is higher amongst UCEM students from areas in IMD quintiles 1-2 than quintiles 3-5, which is the opposite to the trend across the sector. The trend at UCEM is based on a small population size (only 30 amongst quintiles 1-2). Insufficient data means a comparison by POLAR4 is not possible.

1.1.3 Progression to employment or further study

Table 4: UCEM undergraduate progression rates by socio-economic background (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16	
	Number of students	Proportion
Part-time		
IMD quintile 1-2	n/a	n/a
IMD quintile 3-5	60	92%
IMD quintile 1-4	40	90%
IMD quintile 2-5	70	92%

Due to limited data, the only comparison possible is between IMD quintiles 1-4 and quintiles 2-5 for year 2015/16 amongst UCEM part-time students. As shown in Table 4 above, the rate of progression is only marginally lower amongst students in quintiles 1-4 (at 90%) than amongst students in quintiles 2-5 (at 92%).

In the UCEM 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan, data from the 2016/17 DLHE was used to identify the institution's progression rates amongst students on a BSc full-time programme, shown in Table 5 below. Table 5 shows that 100% of UCEM full-time BSc students progressed either to full-time work or further study. UCEM students frequently complete their academic qualifications before going on to satisfy the relevant professional body requirements in order to advance their career progression in the built environment sector.

Table 5: UCEM full-time BSc students – progression rates (based on UCEM DLHE returns)

UCEM DLHE 2016/17		
	Totals	As a % of total full-time
Total full-time BSc students	21	100
Total ethnic	1	Not enough baseline data
Total disabled	1	Not enough baseline data
Progression	21	100
Working full-time	9	42.9
Working part-time	0	0
Work and further study	12	57.1
Due to start a job in the next month	0	0
Engaged in full-time further study, training or research	0	0

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students

1.2.1 Access

Table 6: Ethnicity of UCEM new undergraduate student starters (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Full-time						
White	220	83%	170	80%	120	85%
BAME	40	17%	40	20%	20	15%
Part-time						
White	230	92%	230	91%	400	89%
BAME	20	8%	20	9%	50	11%

As shown in Table 6 above, the proportion of new, full-time starters at UCEM that were black and minority ethnic (BAME) was lower in 2017/18 (at 15%) than in 2015/16 (at 17%). The proportion of BAME full-time students has consistently been lower than that of the sector, and this is largely due to a lower proportion of Asian students. UCEM proportions of BAME students are reflective of, and higher than, the low rate within the UK's land, property and built environment profession, where in 2016 only 1.2% were BAME².

The proportion of UCEM new part-time BAME students has gradually increased, from 8% in 2015/16 to 11% in 2017/18. Excluding the apprenticeship students, the proportion of UCEM new part-time BAME starters remains

² www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/about/building-inclusivity-report.pdf

unchanged in 2016/17 but increased to 12% in 2017/18 (12% is therefore used as the baseline in Table 2a in Section 5). The gradual increase at UCEM across the three years contrasts with the sector trend, which has seen the proportion of BAME students decrease over the same timeframe. The Institution's rate of 11% (and 12% when excluding apprenticeship students) in 2017/18 is consistent with that of the architecture, building and planning subject of study (at 11.8%)³.

1.2.2 Success

Non-continuation

Table 7: UCEM undergraduate continuation rates by ethnicity (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Number of students	Proportion of cohort	Number of students	Proportion of cohort
Full-time				
White	180	85%	130	76%
BAME	30	75%	40	85%

Data is only available for a comparison of white and non-white students (a further breakdown is not possible) on UCEM full-time courses (see Table 7 above). As shown in Table 7 above, in 2015/16 the rate of non-continuation was higher amongst UCEM full-time BAME students than amongst its full-time white students; however, this trend was reversed in 2016/17, with an increase from 75% to 85% of continuing students.

Attainment

Table 8: UCEM undergraduate attainment rates by ethnicity (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Part-time						
White	50	58%	50	65%	70	58%
All	50	57%	50	61%	70	57%

Due to limited data, the only comparison possible using the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard is between white part-time UCEM students and all part-time UCEM students. In each year white students made up the large majority of the total students. In 2016/17 the attainment rate for UCEM white part-time students (at 65%) was marginally higher than that of the overall UCEM part-time population (at 61%), but again only a small proportion of the population was not white. A similar trend is recorded in 2017/18, with a rate of 58% for UCEM white part-time students slightly higher than the 55% for all UCEM part-time students.

1.2.3 Progression to employment or further study

Table 9: UCEM undergraduate progression rates by ethnicity (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16	
	Number of students	Proportion
Part-time		
White	60	92%
All	70	90%

The progression rate is only available for UCEM part-time white student population in 2015/16, where - as shown in Table 9 above - the rate is only slightly higher (at 92%) than the overall rate for UCEM part-time students (at 90%). Again, it is important to note that white students make up a significant proportion of the UCEM population.

As previously discussed in section 1.1.3, progression rates for all UCEM full-time BSc students in 2016/17 was recorded at 100%.

UCEM commits as part of this Plan to provide disaggregated analysis for BAME students in each area of the student lifecycle as soon as sufficient student numbers are reached to enable meaningful analysis.

³ www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/what-study/characteristics

1.3 Mature students

1.3.1 Access

The majority of UCEM students are aged 21 or over, and the average age of its current students is 29. **This is because the core provision of flexible and accessible higher education courses attracts students for whom full-time study would not be possible.** Most UCEM students are already in the workplace and may be unable to afford the time or any loss of income associated with studying full-time on a conventional university course.

Table 10: Age of UCEM new undergraduate student starters (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Full-time						
Young	40	17%	20	10%	20	16%
Mature	220	83%	200	90%	120	84%
Part-time						
Young	30	11%	50	21%	180	40%
Mature	220	89%	210	79%	270	60%

As shown in Table 10 above, in all three years over 80% of UCEM new UK-based, full-time students were mature. This is higher than the sector rate which is recorded as between 27% and 28% across all three years. Young students have made up an increasing proportion of UCEM new part-time students from 2015/16 to 2017/18. This is due to the uptake on UCEM apprenticeship provision, and the fact that these apprenticeship students are included within the part-time group of students in the dataset, as discussed at the beginning of this section. When excluding the apprenticeship students, the rate of mature, part-time students increases to 88% in 2016/17 and to 87% in 2017/18.

1.3.2 Success

Non-continuation

Table 11: UCEM undergraduate continuation rates by age (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Number of students	Proportion of cohort	Number of students	Proportion of cohort
Full-time				
Young	40	85%	n/a	n/a
Mature	180	83%	150	79%
Part-time				
Young	20	85%		
Mature	160	72%		

In 2015/16 the rate of non-continuation amongst UCEM mature, full-time students was slightly higher than the rate amongst UCEM young, full-time students (see table 11 above). The rates for both mature and young students were higher than those of the sector. The gap between the rate of non-continuation of UCEM mature, full-time students and mature, full-time students across the sector increased in 2016/17. No data is available in 2016/17 for UCEM full-time young students.

The rate of non-continuation in 2015/16 amongst UCEM mature, part-time students was higher (at 28%) than amongst its young, part-time students (at 15%). Breaking down the mature students also reveals that the rate of non-continuation increased with age, with a rate of 18% amongst those aged 21-25, 20% amongst those aged 26-30, 34% amongst those aged 31-40 and 40% amongst those aged 41-50. The non-continuation rates for both young and mature, part-time students at UCEM was lower than those of the wider sector (at 38.2% and 25.5% respectively). The trends identified in the OfS data dashboard are consistent with UCEM findings from internal monitoring.

Attainment

Table 12: UCEM undergraduate attainment rates by age (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Part-time						
All	60	57%	60	61%	70	55%
Young	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mature	50	54%	50	60%	60	54%

Insufficient data is available to be reported in the OfS Data Dashboard relating to UCEM full-time attainment rates amongst young students. The attainment rate amongst UCEM mature students is 3-4 percentage points lower than that of the wider sector in 2015/16 and 2017/18. As shown in Table 12 above, the attainment rate amongst UCEM part-time mature students was slightly lower than that of the UCEM overall rate for part-time students in 2015/16 but the gap was closed to 1 percentage point in 2016/17 and 2017/18. When reflecting on this trend it is important to note that mature students make up a large proportion of the UCEM population.

1.3.3 Progression to employment or further study

Table 13: UCEM undergraduate progression rates by age (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16	
	Number of students	Proportion
Part-time		
All	70	90%
Young	n/a	n/a
Mature	70	89%

Insufficient data is available to be reported in the OfS Data Dashboard relating to UCEM full-time progression rates by age. The only rates available on UCEM part-time courses relating to age are those for mature students in 2015/16, which indicates a higher rate of progression than that of the sector. The rate (at 89%) was slightly lower than that of the overall rate for UCEM part-time students in 2015/16. However, when reflecting on this it is important to note that mature students make up a large proportion of the UCEM population. As previously discussed in section 1.1.3, progression rates for all UCEM full-time BSc students in 2016/17 was recorded at 100%.

1.4 Disabled students

1.4.1 Access

Table 14: Proportion of UCEM new undergraduate student starters recorded as disabled (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Full-time						
Disabled	20	9%	10	6%	10	8%
No disability recorded	240	91%	210	94%	140	92%
Part-time						
Disabled	20	8%	20	9%	40	10%
No disability recorded	230	92%	240	91%	410	90%

As seen in Table 14 above, the proportion of UCEM new, full-time students recorded as disabled remained largely consistent between years 2015/16 and 2017/18, ranging between 6-9%. The rates are lower than those of the sector, which have gradually increased over this timeframe. The proportion of UCEM new, part-time students recorded as disabled increased slightly year-on-year between 2015/16 and 2017/18. However, when excluding the apprenticeship students, the proportion of UCEM part-time new starters recorded as disabled decreased to 6% in 2017/18 (6% is therefore used as the baseline in Table 2a in Section 5 with a final target that is higher than the proportion recorded in 2016/17). The proportion of disabled students has increased across the sector, reaching

14.8% in 2017/18. The rate of 6% (when excluding apprenticeship students) in 2017/18 for UCEM was slightly lower than that of the architecture, building and planning subject of study (at 8.6%)⁴.

The UCEM rates are perhaps reflective of the low rate within the UK’s land, property and built environment profession, where in 2016 less than 1% were disabled⁵. A breakdown of UCEM students by disability type does not provide any further insight, given the very small number of students.

1.4.2 Success

Non-continuation

Insufficient data (low student numbers) is available to be reported in the OfS Data Dashboard relating to UCEM non-continuation rates by disability.

Attainment

Insufficient data (low student numbers) is available to be reported in the OfS Data Dashboard relating to UCEM attainment rates by disability.

1.4.3 Progression to employment or further study

Table 15: UCEM undergraduate progression rates by disability (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16	
	Number of students	Proportion
Part-time		
All	70	90%
Disabled	n/a	n/a
No disability recorded	70	89%

Due to the limited data available to be reported in the OfS Data Dashboard relating to UCEM progression rates by disability, the only comparison possible is between non-disabled part-time UCEM students and all part-time UCEM students in 2015/16, with the former marginally higher (at 90%) than the latter (at 89%). When reflecting on this, it is important to note that non-disabled students make up a large proportion of the UCEM population. As previously discussed in section 1.1.3, progression rates for all UCEM full-time BSc students in 2016/17 was recorded at 100%.

UCEM commits as part of this Plan to provide disaggregated analysis for disabled students in each area of the student lifecycle as soon as sufficient student numbers are reached to enable meaningful analysis.

1.5 Care leavers

UCEM currently does not have enough data in this area to analyse care leavers, and care leaver data does not form part of the HESA Alternative Providers Data Return. As part of the implementation of the Access and Participation Plan 2019/20, the institution is planning to commence collection of data in this area.

At present UCEM collects care leaver information for Apprenticeship applicants via the online application form. The information is also requested from UK-domiciled students who utilise the registration portal at the point of their initial and subsequent registrations with UCEM (the portal has only recently been introduced). There are students who do not progress through the Apprenticeship application form or the registration portal; however, from autumn 2020 (when the Transform⁶ project goes live) it will be a requirement in the annual ‘confirmation of details’ task all students will need to complete. This will provide care leaver data for all new UCEM students who commence from autumn 2020, enabling us to analyse this data in terms of access from the beginning of the 2020/21 academic year, which will provide baseline data for setting access targets for 2021/22 onwards. From 2021/22 we will be able to monitor non-continuation data internally for care leavers, and over the five-year Access and Participation Plan establish an internal data set that will enable us to set targets and monitor progress for this under-represented group.

⁴ www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/what-study/characteristics

⁵ www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/about/building-inclusivity-report.pdf

⁶ More information on the Transform project is provided in Section 3.

1.6 Intersections of disadvantage

The majority of UCEM students are aged 21 or over, and the average age of all its current students is 29.

In terms of understanding intersections between data sets, the intersection of mature students therefore occurs across all categories of other under-represented groups, therefore current work on BAME and disabled students recognised their intersection as mature students. UCEM will undertake further intersectional across all of the under-represented groups annually commencing from Year 1 of the Plan. Currently some of the data sets that are specifically relevant to this plan are very small, and therefore not statistically significant, and data collection across some of the under-represented groups has only recently commenced which limits the ability to effectively analyse all the intersections of disadvantage. Such analysis will improve in statistical validity as more data is collected, although, as with all institutions, it will always be constrained by whether students are prepared to divulge the relevant, standard information.

1.7 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education

The OfS Data Dashboard reveals that more than half of student entrants across all institutions are female, and consequently gender is not a main area of focus for this Access and Participation plan. However, feedback from the student community at UCEM on a draft version of this plan (see Section 3.2) emphasised the gender imbalance within the built environment industry. We subsequently analysed UCEM student access and success rates by gender. The OfS Data Dashboard reveals that approximately a third of UCEM full-time and a quarter of UCEM part-time new undergraduate students are female (see Table 16 below). However, these rates are comparatively high when compared against the UK's land, property and built environment profession, where in 2016 just 13% of the profession were female⁷. This will be addressed within UCEM work on equality and diversity.

Table 16: UCEM new undergraduate student starters recorded by gender (based on data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard)

	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18	
	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion	Number of students	Proportion
Full-time						
Female	80	30%	70	33%	50	33%
Male	190	70%	150	67%	100	67%
Part-time						
Female	60	25%	80	29%	120	27%
Male	190	75%	190	71%	330	73%

The OfS Data Dashboard reveals that non-continuation rates are lower amongst UCEM female students than its male students, and that attainment rates amongst UCEM female part-time undergraduate students were also higher than those of their male counterparts in both 2016/17 and 2017/18.

2. Strategic Aims and objectives

2.1 Overview

Historically, the institution's strategy has focused on providing flexible and accessible higher education to distance-based students. This model has proved to be successful for UCEM students, the majority of whom, as previously stated, are over 21 years and seeking to learn whilst in full-time employment. Over the next five years UCEM will continue to offer opportunities to all who wish to enter the built environment profession, and who do not seek to (or who are unable to) study at a campus-based institution.

In 2019 UCEM launched its Vision and Institutional Strategy, including the Strategy for Widening Participation for 2019/2025. More information on this Strategy is provided in Section 3. Supporting widening participation is fundamental to UCEM but, in relation to an Access and Participation Plan, UCEM is constrained by the small percentage of students who are part of the Higher Fees Investment Budget and consequently the finances that would be identifiable through the Plan to support the objectives identified.

The majority of UCEM part-time students are charged below the basic fee amount; however, a proportion of part-time students do study more than the typical four modules per year, which means that some higher fee income is generated from these programmes. Students on UCEM's full-time programmes are charged above the basic fee amount, but only those students that commenced their studies in academic year 2018-19 or later and only where

⁷ www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/about/building-inclusivity-report.pdf

they register on a full six modules in an academic year. Due to the flexible nature of UCEM's programmes, many of our full-time students choose to study fewer than six modules per year which means many of our full-time students are charged below the basic fee amount.

UCEM continues to support accessibility and affordability into higher education by setting module fees at £1,150 per module in 2020/21, which equates to a total of £19,550 for a student completing an undergraduate degree (whether part-time or full-time), which is substantially lower than fees that are generally set by higher education institutions, at £27,750 for a full-time degree. For students on the standard part-time route and studying four modules per year fees are £4,600 per year, which is just below the base fee threshold of £4,625. The only students who will fall into the Plan for 2020/21 are those part-time students who are taking more than four modules per year.

Degree apprenticeship students do not form part of the data set for fees, as the fee is not directly payable by the student and is instead paid by the employer through the apprenticeship levy.

Therefore, it seems likely that UCEM will have c£20,000 from the Higher Fees Investment deployed in 2020/21, and UCEM will additionally invest to ensure that the institution's targets within the Plan can be met. As evidenced in Section 3, other work to widen participation is being undertaken outside of the scope of this Plan through other institutional initiatives, and by building relationships with relevant external organisations.

2.2 Target groups Aims and Objectives

UCEM as an institution continues to actively support widening participation within the sector. As discussed previously, the average age of the UCEM student base is 29, demonstrating very clearly the provision of education to mature students in the UK, and the rest of the world. The institution's aims and objectives are in specific relation to the budget allocation available through the period 2020/25. However, outside the scope of this Plan, **UCEM has set an ambition as part of its five-year institutional strategy to further increase diversity and widening participation through its flexible learning pedagogy.** Further details of these plans are provided in Section 3.

2.2.1 Access

UCEM recognises that it needs to work with the relevant property and construction sector bodies, which the institution supports through its provision, to close the gap in its access rates in relation to lower socio-economic groups, BAME and disabled students.

The institution's objectives for access by 2025 are:

- to reduce the gap between new full-time entrants from IMD quintile 1: quintile 5 to 14 percentage points in 2024/25 (closing the gap from 18 percentage points in 2017/18);
- to reduce the gap between new part-time entrants from IMD quintiles 1: quintiles 5 to 15 percentage points in 2024/25 (closing the gap from 20 percentage points in 2017/18);
- to reduce the gap between new part-time students from POLAR4 quintiles 1-2: quintiles 4-5 to 15 percentage points in 2024/25 (closing the gap from 20 percentage points in 2017/18);
- to increase the proportion of BAME students amongst full-time entrants to 20% in 2024/25 (from a baseline of 15% in 2017/18);
- to increase the proportion of BAME students amongst part-time entrants to 17% in 2024/25 (from a baseline of 12% in 2017/18);
- to reduce the gap between full-time students that are recorded as disabled: not disabled by increasing the proportion of disabled students to 12% in 2024/25 (from 8% in 2017/18); and
- to reduce the gap between new part-time students that are recorded as disabled: not disabled by increasing the proportion of disabled students to 11% in 2024/25 (from 6% in 2017/18).

To meet these aims and objectives, UCEM will:

- raise the profile of a career in the built environment with pre-16 and 16-18 year-olds, with the aim that 10% of those attending would be more likely to consider this route in higher education. This will enable UCEM to

meet the targets set within this Plan. This will be achieved through collaboration with Building People⁸, the Urban Land Institute⁹ and relevant further education Colleges to increase reach in this area;

- enable access to financial support for those specifically from under-represented groups, through the provision of a fund to assist with the cost of tuition fees, and a hardship fund targeting those who otherwise may not be able to study through a lack of financial support for childcare or equipment. Success will be measured through the number of applications received, demonstrating the profile of the financial support available, awards given and monitoring the progress of these students through their studies. By 2025 the funds available under this Plan through fee waivers will have doubled from £8,000 to £16,000.
- through working with Building People enable easier access to information of organisations and initiatives that provide access to work and education in the built environment, which enable under-represented groups to be more aware of the opportunities that are available, including higher education. This will be measured through a percentage increase in enquiries to the online portal, and evaluation of their feedback and career choices from the information provided;
- remove unnecessary barriers for prospective students and ensuring our Admissions policy and procedure is inclusive and fair to everyone, regardless of background; and
- work directly with employers to support the recruitment of underrepresented students onto UCEM's apprenticeship programmes.

2.2.2 Success (Non-continuation and attainment)

The institution's objectives for success by 2025 are:

- to reduce the gap in non-continuation between part-time mature students and part-time young students to eight percentage points (closing the gap from 13 percentage points in 2015/16);
- to reduce the gap in non-continuation between full-time BAME students and full-time white students to six percentage points (closing the gap from 10 percentage points in 2015/16);
- to reduce the gap in non-continuation between full-time students from IMD quintile 1 and IMD quintile 5 to four percentage points (closing the gap from eight percentage points in 2016/17); and
- to seek to identify the non-continuation rate and attainment rate amongst disabled students by 2020/21 in order to establish a baseline upon which any future targets relating to this group can be set. We will undertake analysis annually as new data is received and as we refine past data sets, especially as we review our first Access and Participation Plan for 2019/20.

To meet these aims and objectives, UCEM will:

- raise the profile of successful UCEM students and alumni from under-represented groups who provide peer-support and mentoring to students. Success will be measured by having active and engaged Student Ambassadors for each of the under-represented groups. In 2020/21 Student Ambassadors will be rolled out on the BSc courses and this will be extended to the degree apprenticeship courses in 2021/22, and to Postgraduate courses by 2023/24;
- following feedback from students as part of the consultation on this Plan, Student Ambassadors will also be provided for female students, and those from military backgrounds, by 2021/22;
- have data-informed strategies to improve non-continuation for each of the under-represented groups. These strategies will extend beyond those students specifically within the data set of this Plan and target all students at UCEM. By 2021/22 UCEM will have a data-informed strategy for lower socio-economic groups and by 2023/24 this will be extended to care leavers; and
- student-led strategies on improving the student experience, including student sense of community and delivering student success for those from under-represented groups, utilising student feedback by 2021/22. This will be measured via the UCEM module evaluation process, and engagement from students as part of the process. In 2022/23 this will be extended to obtain evaluation on the Transform project (details in Section 3).

⁸ <https://buildingpeople.org.uk/> Building People is a social enterprise that has developed a technology platform to connect those seeking learning/work experience and mentoring opportunities across the built environment

⁹ <https://uk.uli.org/> Urban Land Institute is a network of people in every profession in real estate development, from all over the world.

2.2.3 Progression

The data presented in section 1 does indicate that progression rates are slightly lower amongst students from IMD quintile 1, students that are not recorded as ethnic origin White, and mature students; however, determining the size of the gap is difficult given the small population sizes. Therefore, the institution's objective for the next year is to maintain its strong overall progression rate (at 93% or above), and to seek to identify the size of any gaps in progression between different groups of students, in order to establish a baseline upon which future targets relating to underrepresented groups can be set. We will undertake analysis annually as new data is received and as we refine past data sets, especially as we review our first Access and Participation Plan for 2019/20.

To meet these aims and objectives, UCEM will:

- raise the profile of a career in the built environment to increase the number of students applying for the professional body final assessments within 12 months of graduating, which will lead to career progression. This will be measured through data provided by the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, and follow-up on UCEM alumni. At present there is no baseline data; however, this, where possible, will be collected during the first two years of the Plan, with a measurable target put in place based on this data.
- provide career preparation in addition to the courses content. The intent will be to ensure that any student who successfully studies with UCEM will be ready to seek and gain employment within the industry.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

Overview

The core purpose statement for UCEM, which is adapted from the objectives of its Royal Charter, reflects that providing access to all is integral to UCEM:

'to provide truly accessible, relevant and cost-effective education, enabling students to enhance careers, increase professionalism and contribute to a better built environment'.



Figure 1: UCEM Institutional Strategy Overview 2019/25

This strategic approach to widening participation flows from the overarching strategic document, the five-year Institutional Vision and Strategy 2019/25 which embeds widening participation. This was approved by the Board of Trustees (including the student trustee) and the Executive in December 2018 with the core purpose persisting from 2013.

The strategy for the next five years is focused on impact and influence, with eight areas of focus (themes) to ensure delivery. The overview of the strategy is shown in Figure 1, which details the eight tenets and focus on all areas of the student lifecycle, including a specific tenet for widening participation.

Within the strategy document, short - medium - and long-term goals are set out for widening participation. These goals apply to all UCEM

students, not just those who form part of this Access and Participation Plan.

To support delivery of this strategy, the goals will be cascaded to staff and incorporated as part of the annual target setting and appraisal process. Widening participation will be integral to roles within the institution, and appropriate training will be provided. As referenced in Section 3.2, UCEM will continue to work in partnership with students to further develop and support the widening participation objectives.

UCEM has applied the theory of change to each of its targets, aims and objectives within the Plan. This is shown related to access and lower-socio-economic groups in Figure 2.

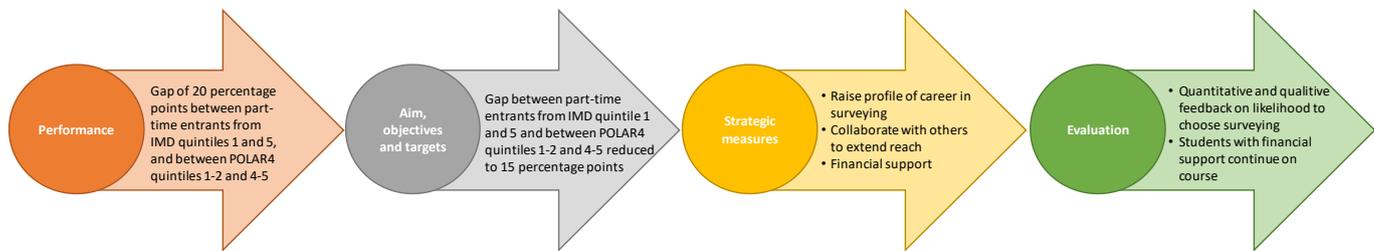


Figure 2: Theory of Change Access by 2025: Lower Socio-Economic Groups (part-time students)

Other areas of the 2019/25 Institutional Strategy are closely aligned with access, success and progression to align with the Strategic Aims and Objectives within this Plan.

As part of the 2019/25 Institutional Strategy (under reach, depth and collaboration) UCEM will continue its development of apprenticeship courses at Level 3, Level 6 and Level 7. The strategy is designed to increase the portfolio of courses that UCEM offers within the built environment, to enable more students to access higher education through a vocational route, particularly to support the aim of increasing access to BAME students and those from lower-socio economic groups.

The Board of Trustees will continue to invest, to enable UCEM to launch new courses which meet the approved apprenticeship standards. This work commences with the introduction of a Level 6 Building Control apprenticeship in 2019/20. To enable successful delivery of the apprenticeship courses, UCEM will continue to work closely with employers, and has put in place a Business Development Team to support employers with apprenticeship provision.

The recent report from OfS on ‘Understanding effective part-time provision for undergraduates from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds’¹⁰ identified that providers should be doing more to analyse and interrogate existing data ‘to understand the characteristics of their learner population’, as well as work to ‘Identify the reasons for drop-out’ and developing specific initiatives to support students. This mirrors what is included within the strategy for ‘Student Outcomes’, with specific annual targets for overall student success.

As referenced in Section 2, UCEM will continue to work in ‘collaboration’ with the professional bodies through activities such as the UCEM Professional Engagement Forum to ensure that its courses map to the professional competencies, and that UCEM students have a route to professional status. This is to directly support the strategic aim of increasing the percentage of students who opt to take the professional body assessments within 12 months of graduating.

In addition to the 2019/25 Institutional Strategy, in 2020 an internal project that UCEM has been running for three years comes to completion, and more details are provided in ‘Curriculum, pedagogic and student support’.

Alignment with other strategies

Curriculum, pedagogic and student support

Widening participation is embedded within the UCEM Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTA), with particular reference to accessibility and how different learning approaches including the use of digital technologies can support different student needs. This has driven the work for the Transform project¹¹, and will continue to be central to the evaluation of the project. An extract from the LTA Strategy is provided for information:

‘To provide learning, teaching and assessment that is accessible.

UCEM LTA will be constructed with the aim of widening participation and promoting engagement from students from all geographical locations and prior educational experiences. LTA methodology, delivered through appropriate technological media, will promote the application of learning and knowledge that is specifically relevant to a student’s own local and individual experience.’

¹⁰ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/ba3c25b9-c261-463d-9587-55781cd84280/understanding-effective-part-time-provision-for-undergraduates-from-under-represented-and-disadvantaged-backgrounds.pdf>

¹¹ Project Transform is a UCEM 3-year project which comes to completion in 2020. The focus of the Project has been to review all aspects of our current programme delivery to lead to student success.

The outcome of the LTA Strategy has been the Transform project, which launches fully in autumn 2020. The objective of the Project is to better support students to successful outcomes, as part of an institutional focus on continuation and success. The strategic decisions within the Project have occurred after analysis of internal student data including learning analytics available through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which enabled an increased understanding of how students learn online.

The outcomes of the project specifically relevant to widening participation within the strategic approach to access and success include:

- supporting the transition into higher education, such as the launch of Foundation Year entry – which provide non-standard entrance courses;
- student outcome-led design, so that all modules are delivered using an assessment-first approach, that enables a personalised approach learning to be taken; and
- offering in-semester resits on all modules (which is not currently part of the standard structure of UCEM courses), to enable students to successfully complete in-year.

The principles of project Transform have been assessed against the LTA to ensure alignment. The Project has used the pedagogic approach of student outcome-led design to improve student success for all types of student.

Equality and Diversity

This Access and Participation Plan has been prepared with due regard to the institution's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Within the UCEM Code of Practice for Equality and Diversity, UCEM states its commitment to '*securing equal opportunities for all individuals; celebrating diversity and eliminating unfair discrimination in the pursuance of its mission*'. The Code of Practice is reviewed by the Quality and Enhancement Standards Committee bi-annually.

As UCEM is re-designing its courses and modules, as part of the Transform project, it is ensuring that the institution is compliant with the latest accessibility requirements for public bodies WCAG 2.1 level AA.

Changes to policies and practices are also assessed against Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) to ensure that students with protected characteristics are not adversely affected through the changes.

Student Support

UCEM has also developed a holistic approach to student support as part of the strategy to improve student success and attainment, through previous initiatives of 'No Student left Behind', and now 'Student Success'. Both have targeted Key Performance Indicator (KPI) improvements across the speed of responses to students on the VLE, marking turnaround, module success rates, and overall course completion rates. This is being managed by Module Tutors, the Student Engagement Team and online Facilitators. In addition, UCEM has put in place a team dedicated to identifying students at potential risk of failure or non-continuation, to provide more directed support. Part of the institution's approach to the provision of study skills is the emphasis upon personal development through reflective practice. This enables students to be able to identify areas of development and either self-serve or seek the support required. Through these approaches, UCEM seeks to enable personalised support. The use of KPIs has enabled UCEM to trial and assess new approaches and develop an iterative incremental improvement approach to supporting greater student success.

UCEM works to support all students who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health. A self-care guide is available on the UCEM website, which aims to help students and prospective students prepare for any stress they may face whilst studying. Throughout their studies, students are encouraged to engage with a number of resources aimed at improving wellbeing, such as: the out of hours listening service provided by London Nightline; "Supercharge your Wellbeing" webinars hosted by Lionheart; mental health awareness events across the year; and an area of the VLE dedicated to providing news and updates on mental health; as well as other disability support services. Students with diagnosed mental health conditions are eligible to receive reasonable adjustments to reduce any barriers they may be facing with their studies, and these are agreed with each student on a case-by-case basis to find the arrangements that best suit their needs. Future developments in mental health at UCEM are likely to include a full Wellbeing Strategy to embed wellbeing in all stages of the students' journey, from enrolment to graduation.

Higher Education Academy (HEA) 'Framework for student access, retention, attainment and progression'¹² identified that a sense of community was also important in the student lifecycle to support attainment. Based on this and UCEM results in the NSS survey related to student community, UCEM is now focusing on developing a greater sense of "belonging" to the institution. As a relatively small, specialist online provider without a students' union, seeking, gathering and listening to the students' voice presents challenges, as does completing the communication loop back to them. UCEM has appointed a new Director of Student Community within the Online Education Team, to champion and lead on initiatives to improve this, including setting up informal communication channels on the VLE and student focus groups.

Employability

The institution's strategic measure for employability continues to enable its graduates to have the skills and knowledge to meet the professional competences of the built environment sector. This includes the provision of information on meeting the requirements of the professional bodies through the provision of informative webinars. In addition, UCEM continues to work collaboratively with the relevant professional bodies, including RICS and the CIOB, to ensure its courses meet the necessary professional body requirements for continued accreditation. This is to support the strategic aim related to progression of 90-100% of students in employment/further study after completion of the course.

Across all UCEM programmes, there will be an emphasis on developing both subject knowledge and skills development alongside career readiness, via the provision of employability skills and personal and professional development. Through developing students' career skills, both via online presence and application techniques, it is aimed to enable students to gain employment opportunities within the industry. Whilst these may be in placements and work experience initially, the aim is that all who are successful in their studies enter full-time into the industry post-graduation.

Collaboration

Close collaboration and engagement with employers continue to be part of the long term UCEM strategy to provide accessible higher education, as well as a route to qualification through the Level 3 provision. This strategy informs the development of apprenticeship courses that will most meet the requirements of employers, and the skills shortage within the sector.

To deliver the measures within this Plan, UCEM is following a strategy to build lasting relationships with a minimum of two Further Education colleges within Reading.

The institution is also collaborating with Building People as part of its strategy to improve diversity within the built environment sector. Through the acquisition of Building People, UCEM has been able to actively participate in developing the product roadmap, as well as investing financially to help accelerate the growth of the Building People offer. During the next five years, through the use of a bespoke web-based platform and driving greater levels of collaboration with industry and employers, Building People aims to register and profile in excess of 10,000 individuals from diverse backgrounds and provide them with simple access to services aimed at helping them into careers within the built environment. UCEM has already secured £200,000 of funding from industry partners to deliver on this work over the next few years and has set up an industry-led Steering Committee to guide Building People and its business plan. The last year has seen the launch of the new Search Portal, which aggregates information on hundreds of mission groups and initiatives all aimed at helping specific groups into work. The technical specification for the new technology platform has been developed and tendered, and the first phase will go live during 2019, with a further and more comprehensive launch planned for 2020. It is intended to use this initiative to support both our part-time and full-time students in relevant employment as part of supporting the strategic progression aim.

Alignment with other work and funding sources

To deliver the apprenticeship provision and meet the strategic objectives, UCEM meets the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

¹² <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/studentaccess-retention-attainment-progression-in-he.pdf>

Financial support

Financial support as part of this Plan is provided through the hardship fund and in the form of fee waivers.

The aim of the financial support is to directly increase access to study for those from underrepresented groups, who otherwise may be unable to access higher education due to the cost.

Evidence base for Financial support and its evaluation

UCEM has evidence from the previous five years of impact of fee waivers on BAME part-time students based overseas and recognises that financial factors have been cited by UK students as reasons for non-continuation at UCEM. Data on the impact of the financial support provided to students under the first iteration of UCEM's Access and Participation Plan will be used to inform the ongoing distribution. Appropriate use will be made of the OfS Financial support evaluation toolkit survey tool.

Financial Support will be available as follows:

In Year one, £4,000 will be allocated via fee waivers to target under-represented groups who wish to access UCEM courses, and £4,000 allocated to students whose household income is up to £25,000. Over the five-year Plan this figure will increase each year, and by 2024/25 £8,000 will be allocated to students from under-represented groups, and £8,000 to target students whose household income is up to £25,000 with particular focus on BAME, Mature or Disabled students or students who are Care Leavers.

In addition, £1,000 will be allocated to a Hardship Fund for each year of the Plan, to provide additional financial support for items such as assistive technology for disabled students, or additional support with items such as childcare costs.

The allocation of financial support to students will be approved by a Working Group, which is Chaired by the Principal, to ensure independence and transparency in the allocation of funds. The criteria for each area of financial support will be published on the website, so this is clear to applicants.

Criteria will be as follows:

- applications for those from underrepresented groups – applicants must have received an offer for a UCEM undergraduate programme, provide evidence that they are BAME, disabled, mature or a care leaver and provide evidence of their financial position. A short statement of the reasons they want to undertake their chosen course and how they plan to allocate time to their study must also be provided.
- applications for those whose household income is up to £25,000 – applicants must have received an offer for a UCEM undergraduate programme, and evidence that their household income does not exceed £25,000. A short statement of the reasons they wish to undertake the course and how they plan to allocate time to their study must also be provided.
- Hardship Fund – criteria will be based on evidence of the requirement for additional equipment, or childcare, and include financial information.

A Working Group, chaired by the Principal, will approve the allocation of funds. Depending on the number of eligible applications, partial or full module fee waivers will be offered, up to a maximum amount allocated under the Plan each year. This will be either partial funding at between 25-50% of the module fee, or for the full module fee (£1,150). For students studying the standard route of four modules in year one, this means that two students could receive full funding, or c. four students receiving partial funding. By year five of the Plan up to four students could receive full funding, and c. eight students partial funding.

Continued support to these students will be provided in future years of study depending on academic performance, and the continued eligibility under the criteria of each Fund. Outside of this Plan UCEM also provides additional funding support to students through a discretionary Principal's Fund and a Redundancy Support Scheme.

3.2 Student consultation

UCEM is not campus-based and does not have a students' union. The institution therefore believes that the best way of involving its students in the development and implementation of this Plan is through consultation with UCEM Student Representatives.

Student representatives have been consulted from all UCEM courses and deliberative committees in preparing this Plan, including the Lead Student Representative, who is also a trustee on the Board. The Student Representatives who were consulted were from diverse backgrounds to ensure a range of perspectives on the proposed measures. Student Representatives were asked whether they agree with the measures UCEM is proposing to increase access, success and progression within the Plan, and what else UCEM should consider.

All the students were supportive of the measures that UCEM outlines in this Plan:

'I agree with these measures, particularly in relation to visiting schools to advertise the built environment. When I was at school, apprenticeships and construction generally were not really advertised as career paths'

'Yes, there is a constant thought process observed at board level on how best to achieve this.'

Themes emerging from the student feedback received were in the following areas:

- UCEM should also consider a focus on the ex-military to provide a route to qualifications to those leaving the forces. *'Consideration for Ex-Forces. We are focusing on this within my company and it is a big issue with people leaving the forces and not having suitable qualifications to enter jobs within construction. We are currently looking at how ex-forces can be included on apprenticeship style job roles';*
- a focus on women to improve the current gender imbalance within the built environment. *'UCEM could consider extending the specifically targeted groups to include a focus on women in order to improve the gender imbalance in the built environment.';*
- to have webinars on CV writing and interview skills, as well as the professional body requirements;
- to have a dedicated team assigned to monitor mature and BAME students who are not completing activities. *'Actively keep tabs on mature students who may not be as active in completing their weekly activities. Having a dedicated team assigned to such students and those who are within BAME and differently abled groups that maybe averaging below a certain grade point.';* and
- have an online suggestion box for students to put forward possible ways to increase support.

This feedback will be incorporated into the programme of activities to support the Plan.

Feedback from the students will be used by UCEM to monitor, amend and develop action plans on a year-round basis.

- Student ambassadors will play a particularly important role in monitoring the Plan as they will represent the under-represented groups. UCEM will work with the ambassadors to gain feedback from students within the focus groups, ensuring that the impact of the access and participation initiatives can be evaluated and that UCEM can improve and enhance when required;
- Student representatives will be required to draw attention to the Plan and will be supported in obtaining feedback and comment from the student body on the projects contained therein. UCEM responses and actions arising from this feedback, as well as the findings from its monitoring and evaluation activities, will be fed back to the student representatives and summarised on the VLE;
- Updates to this Plan, actions taken, and improvements made will be communicated to students via the VLE and the Student Newsletter. Student ambassadors and student representatives will be supported in encouraging students to give UCEM feedback;
- UCEM will continue to consult and engage with its student body through its Student Representatives Network and the UCEM Student Experience and Success Group (SESMG). The SESMG meets monthly to focus on initiatives to support student success and review student feedback; and
- Additionally, UCEM will continue to analyse the feedback from its annual internal Student Experience Surveys and the NSS to help inform improvements and enhancements to the student experience.

Evaluation strategy

Strategic context

2019/20 is the first year the institution will have an Access and Participation Plan and is therefore in the development phase of the evaluation strategy, and initially constrained by both the size of its relevant activity and its limited data. However, it is making a significant institutional commitment to widening participation in its Strategic Plan, and therefore effective evaluation is critical, not only for the activities related with the Access and Participation Plan but also the KPIs associated with the Strategic Plan itself.

UCEM is committed to supporting the key staff working on access and participation, and to using national research material including data and reports (made available by OfS, NCOPS and other sources where material is openly available).

In preparing this plan and considering the institutional approach to evaluation the OfS self-assessment material has been completed. The commitment and strategic context are both strong but given this early stage of access and participation activities it is not yet possible to anticipate how effective the evaluation process will be. As part of the reflective practice UCEM recognises that there is emergent practice in the other categories of design and implementation, which will need to be reviewed. In the course of this Plan there is clear commitment to following sector good practice and to connecting UCEM's own evaluation to the theories of change as identified earlier in this Section.

Programme design

The UCEM Access and Participation programme design draws from the *HEA Framework for student access, retention, attainment and progression in higher education* and other similar guidance. This is further enhanced through the continued analysis of UCEM data and student feedback, and through the two UCEM research centres (Online Learning Research Centre and Construction and Property Research Centre), as well as learning from good practice elsewhere. Its interventions use students (as ambassadors and mentors), events, financial incentives, specialist staff providing advice, and build on several well established and key collaborative relationships within the built environment. Whilst the institution has not yet been able to evaluate activities through the 2019/20 Plan, it has established academic evaluation processes available from the assurance of its teaching and learning including focus groups and surveys.

UCEM has identified a suite of activities (programmes) to deliver the strategic aims within this Plan, and in each case defined aims, and objectives for these activities. It has also looked at theory of change at a general and modest level, establishing its expectations for the various outcomes. These have then been used to establish the relevant basic theory of change which supports the interventions concerned and the most appropriate evaluation being chosen in each case. UCEM has sought to establish the measurable factors in relation to each of its programmes.

Evaluation design

UCEM has considered national sources and examined relevant research in preparing this Access and Participation Plan, including OfS guidance.¹³ It also takes part in workshops, seminars and is a member of relevant network groups such as GuildHE and will continue to use TASSO-HE materials recognising the challenges of ensuring applicability of practice in universities to SMEs such as UCEM. The institution will continue to seek the most suitable benchmarks for evaluation of its access and participation input activities, though as a specialist HE provider of online built environment education it is challenging to find relevant benchmarks. At this stage the evaluation is more narrative and empirical, given UCEM is implementing its first Access and Participation Plan in 2019/20.

In considering the appropriate forms of design UCEM looks to use robust methods and sources, building on sector experience elsewhere. The evaluation design will initially focus on qualitative and case study materials, using feedback from a range of sources including students, module tutors and employers, due to the fact that in Years 1 and 2 of the Plan the data sets will be small which will provide limited statistical validity.

Evaluation implementation

UCEM has particular opportunities for data sharing with its partners from the built environment professions, FE partners and within GuildHE groups. However, the institution has to be especially careful in relation to GDPR issues, given its small data sets. Opportunities to use benchmarks may be more constrained for example through the cost of tracking activity via HEAT and there is no opportunity to be part of an NCOP. While some initial costs have been identified and funds already allocated to support data collection, analysis and staff training relating to both evaluation and monitoring, until UCEM has seen the results of its first Access and Participation Plan 2019/20 it will not have full confidence in its initial effectiveness. As UCEM develops its interventions, it will use surveys, student focus groups and data on participation to understand the effects of the activities that have been put in place.

¹³ www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/standards-of-evidence-and-self-assessment-toolkit/

Learning to shape improvements

As noted previously, given its specialist focus and scale, and the prominent position of widening participation within the Strategic Plan to 2025, the Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees will be able to share findings and review material effectively. A member of the Senior Leadership Team is responsible for the staff team directly involved with access and participation work. UCEM course evaluations are examined primarily through existing UCEM Committees that will track progress of activities and also look at the monitoring against both the Strategic Plan and Access and Participation Plan targets.

UCEM understands its intended audience and how the findings will be used. UCEM will focus on the distinct profile of its students and the flexible online learning pedagogy to inform the learning improvements, as practices from standard undergraduate universities are not necessarily so transferable without some adaptation. It should also be recognised that with some of the long timescales between activity and outcome, the subject specialism and modes of study, it is more difficult to isolate the impact of one particular activity compared to others, or UCEM interventions compared to a range of external factors not least the students' employers.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

Monitoring and Evaluation

Widening participation is one of eight key strategic themes for UCEM in its recently approved Strategic Plan for 2019/25. Overarching targets for access and participation are set using national datasets through which there can be a comparison of the UCEM position to the sector as a whole. UCEM will continue to develop collection and management of data in relation to the different groups of students it works with so that their success can be monitored, tracked and analysed.

Monitoring of the Access and Participation Plan occurs from Board level through to the Academic and Management Committees within the institution.

A Working Group, chaired by the Principal, acts as the focus for monitoring and evaluation of student financial support. It will act as the main focus for information on the financial support distributed under the first iteration of UCEM's Access and Participation Plan. The Group will undertake analysis through survey tools and data review; in particular the OfS Financial support evaluation toolkit survey tool. Drawing from its information on impact on students of the financial support it has distributed, it will make appropriate adjustments, for example to the application process, approval criteria and conditions of grant.

The Board of Trustees has formally approved this Plan, and as part of this it has reviewed the OFS Guidance to Boards¹⁴. The Board receives quarterly updates on performance as part of standard reporting, which will include reporting on the Access and Participation Plan. This will align with the monitoring of the Strategic Plan, including the key tenet of widening participation, which will lead the focus on this area throughout the institution.

The UCEM Senior Leadership Team is responsible for all aspects of the overall management of operational activities at UCEM. The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that UCEM executes the agreed objectives and goals within the Strategic Plan, delivering on the Core Purpose and realising the UCEM Vision. The Access and Participation Plan forms part of the agreed objectives that sit within the remit of the Senior Leadership Team, which will be responsible for monitoring, review, delivery and agreeing corrective action where necessary to meet objectives. Lessons learned from the evaluation of input activities will be embedded within this oversight.

From an academic perspective the UCEM Academic Board will monitor and evaluate the success of the institution in providing access, success and progression to the identified groups of students, and will monitor the implementation of the Plan and relevant data sets to assess progress and further action that may be required, with particular reference to the LTA.

Analysis and monitoring from the Board of Trustees, the Senior Leadership Team and Academic Board will enable the institution to identify future indicators which can be used to measure performance and create wider opportunities for access, success and progression.

¹⁴ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/promoting-equal-opportunities/evaluation-and-effective-practice/governing-bodies/>

In addition to the monitoring that will occur through the Board and Committee structures monitoring will also occur through business as usual activities. Monitoring of the access targets occurs during the recruitment and admissions periods to ensure UCEM is attracting students from the identified groups. The continued success of UCEM students occurs through the academic and student support structures within the institution as referenced earlier in this Section. UCEM will identify and work with at risk students so that appropriate supportive action can be taken. The end of year results will provide a further monitoring opportunity to consider how successfully the institution has supported and retained the students in the target groups. In particular, UCEM will continue from 2019/20 collecting, monitoring and analysing data on care leavers. In the first instance, the admissions process has been amended to ensure that this data is captured.

4. Provision of information to students

This Access and Participation Plan will be communicated to students in the following ways:

- a. For prospective students, this Plan will be available on the UCEM website.
- b. Prospective students will be provided with information on the fees for the duration of their course in their UCEM Offer Letter, which includes a detailed fee schedule for the entire course. Enquiries are provided with fee information on the relevant course pages of the website.
- c. Prospective and Current students can access information on financial support available on the UCEM website. In addition, the UCEM Offer Letter, and information that is issued to current students inviting them to re-register signposts students to financial support options.
- d. For current students, UCEM will summarise its plans in its biannual Student Newsletter which is sent to all students in the summer and winter.
- e. A full version of the Plan will also be made available to all current students on UCEM virtual learning environment.
- f. UCEM will ensure its student ambassadors understand the Plan, so they can provide feedback in due course and support others who wish to take up opportunities.

UCEM will ensure that staff are receiving specific training and information sessions on this Plan and key actions, and their role in delivering its success. This is to ensure there is common purpose and strategic focus across all UCEM teams.

Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

*Course type not listed by the provider as available to new entrants in 2020-21. This means that any such course delivered to new entrants in 2020-21 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Inflationary statement:

The module fee for new starters in academic year 2020/21 will remain the same throughout the students' time on the course. The fees for new starters on programmes in 2021/22 and subsequent years will increase in line with inflation as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI). Annual inflationary increases will be set at no more than CPI plus 2% for the year in question, as per the Bank of England's inflation forecast for that year.

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	2020/21 intake that will study insufficient modules in a year to exceed the basic fee cap	£5,750
First degree	2020/21 intake that will study sufficient modules in a year to exceed the basic fee cap	£6,900
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 students

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£6,900
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Targets and investment plan

2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: University College of Estate Management

Provider UKPRN: 10008173

Investment summary

The OFS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:

The figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Total access activity investment (£)	£10,000.00	£15,141.80	£23,410.00	£40,625.80	£38,546.00
Access (pre-16)	£2,500.00	£3,785.45	£5,852.50	£10,156.45	£9,636.50
Access (post-16)	£5,000.00	£3,785.45	£5,852.50	£10,156.45	£9,636.50
Access (adults and the community)	£2,500.00	£7,570.90	£11,705.00	£20,312.90	£19,273.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£9,000.00	£11,000.00	£15,000.00	£15,000.00	£17,000.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HF%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£72,830.00	£96,935.00	£108,125.00	£99,300.00	£67,590.00
Access investment	13.7%	15.6%	21.7%	40.9%	57.0%
Financial support	12.4%	11.3%	13.9%	15.1%	25.2%
Research and evaluation	1.4%	1.0%	0.9%	1.0%	1.5%
Total investment (as %HFI)	27.5%	28.0%	36.4%	57.0%	83.7%

Provider fee information 2021-22**Summary of 2021-22 course fees**

*course type not listed by the provider as available to new entrants in 2021-22. This means that any such course delivered to new entrants in 2021-22 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Table 1a - Full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	2014/15 intake. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to continuing students only	£5,700
First degree	2015/16 intake. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to continuing students only	£5,880
First degree	2016/17 intake. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to continuing students only	£5,970
First degree	2017/18 intake. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to continuing students only	£6,090
First degree	2018/19 intake that will study insufficient modules in a year to exceed the basic fee cap. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year.	Fee applies to continuing students only	£4,400
First degree	2018/19 intake that will study sufficient modules in a year to exceed the basic fee cap. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to continuing students only	£6,600
First degree	2019-20 intake. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to continuing students only	£6,750

First degree	2020-21 intake. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to continuing students only	£6,900
First degree	2021/22 semester one intake that will register on a maximum of six modules in year one. In year two, these students are combined with those commencing in 2021/22 semester two (row 23). 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (the fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year).	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£7,050
First degree	2021/22 semester two intake that will register on a maximum of three modules in year one and therefore not exceed the fee cap. In year two onwards, these students are included in row 22. They will then have one semester to complete in year four. 'Course fee' represents the maximum fee this cohort will be charged per year (£7,050 from year 2 onwards). The fee will be lower for those students that choose to register on fewer than six modules per year.	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£7,050
Foundation degree	*		*
Foundation year/Year 0	*		*
HNC/HND	*		*
CertHE/DipHE	*		*
Postgraduate ITT	*		*
Accelerated degree	*		*
Sandwich year	*		*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*		*
Other	*		*

Table 1b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*		*
Foundation degree	*		*
Foundation year/Year 0	*		*
HNC/HND	*		*
CertHE/DipHE	*		*
Postgraduate ITT	*		*
Accelerated degree	*		*
Sandwich year	*		*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*		*
Other	*		*

Table 1c - Part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
------------------------	-------------------------	---------	-------------

First degree	2021-22 intake. The majority of students starting on a part-time course study a maximum of 4 modules per year. Because of the flexibility offered by UCEM, students on a part-time course can increase their module-load to 5 or 6 modules per year; in this instance, the student is recorded as full-time and the equivalent (year of entry) full-time maximum fee applies.	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,935
First degree	All Intakes pre 2021-22. Maximum fee of £6,900 applies to students starting in 2020-21, whilst the maximum course fee decreases by intake year. The majority of students starting on a part-time course study a maximum of 4 modules per year. Because of the flexibility offered by UCEM, students on a part-time course can increase their module-load to 5 or 6 modules per year; in this instance, the student is recorded as full-time and the equivalent (year of entry) full-time maximum fee applies.	Fee applies to continuing students only	£6,900
Foundation degree	*		*
Foundation year/Year 0	*		*
HNC/HND	*		*
CertHE/DipHE	*		*
Postgraduate ITT	*		*
Accelerated degree	*		*
Sandwich year	*		*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*		*
Other	*		*

Table 1d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*		*
Foundation degree	*		*
Foundation year/Year 0	*		*
HNC/HND	*		*
CertHE/DipHE	*		*
Postgraduate ITT	*		*
Accelerated degree	*		*
Sandwich year	*		*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*		*
Other	*		*