

Sparsholt College

Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 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 Sparsholt College (University Centre Sparsholt) here [Access-and-Participation-Plan-2020-2025.pdf \(sparsholt.ac.uk\)](#)

Key points

see p2-15 of the full plan

The focus of our access and participation plan is to increase recruitment of students from identified areas where young people are less likely to attend university. It also focuses on making sure that students from these areas complete their degree. Data from 2019/20) showed that compared to their peers, some groups of students at University Centre Sparsholt (UCS) are less likely to enrol and complete their degree than other certain groups of students.

- Students from low-income backgrounds, from particular postcode areas and from ethnic minority backgrounds (particularly males) are less likely to enrol onto a degree at UCS.
- Students from low income backgrounds or with a disability are less likely to complete their degree.

Overall good progress has been made in increasing enrolments from the target groups but there is more work to do to increase enrolments of male students from these groups.

Currently students from low income backgrounds and those with a disability are now equally as likely to complete their degree as their peers.

Fees we charge

At UCS, the maximum annual fees charged are:

- £9,250 for full-time students
- £6,600 for full-time Veterinary Nursing students

You can see a full list of fees at UCS here: [Fees and Funding | University Centre Sparsholt](#)

Financial help available

see p30-31 of the full plan

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed. The support includes:

- An annual bursary of £750 for the duration of the course if the student's household income is below £25,000
- An annual bursary of up to £750 per year for students from low-income backgrounds, from postcode areas where young people are less likely to go to university and from ethnic minority backgrounds where household income is below £32,960.
- A bursary of up to £500 to support students with disability to access a diagnostic assessment for learning differences.

- Hardship payments to support students with travel, accommodation or subsistence.
- A residential bursary to support Care Experienced students who have been in local authority care at any time since the age of 14 years to have access to accommodation all year round.

Information for students

see p36 of the full plan

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at Course Information events held seven times each year, Offer Holders days held twice each year, and by regular email communications. The on-line registration process includes clear information for all students and any student declaring a disability on their application form is contacted individually to discuss the support that is available.

- We regularly update our information relating to Student Services and Wellbeing on our website [Support and Resources | University Centre Sparsholt](#) as well as providing information for neurodiverse students here [Autism & Uni Toolkit – University Centre Sparsholt \(autism-uni.org\)](#) .
- Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available through our internal communications campaigns, emails and the annual online registration process.

For the most up-to-date information, see our website; [University Centre Sparsholt - Advancing Futures](#)

What we are aiming to achieve

see p16-18 of the full plan

Our overall aim is to support students to access higher education and be successful in their achievement and progression to employment. We have identified the following areas in which to focus our work:

Supporting local schools - During 2022/23 we will introduce revision sessions in Maths, English and Science GCSEs, mentoring for school pupils at risk of not continuing in education after their GCSEs and a Higher Education Early Insight Programme leading to an additional qualification for local target schools.

Broadening the range of higher education programmes available at UCS - We will increase the number of Higher Apprenticeships that we offer and introduce vocational skills qualifications for local employees.

Students from low participation areas and low income backgrounds – By 2025 we will increase the number of students entering UCS from these groups to

- Reduce the recruitment gap between students from the highest and lowest areas of participation to 9% and the highest and lowest income backgrounds to 25% by 2025.
- The continuation rate (the proportion of students continuing to the next year of their course) to be equal to that of all other students

Ethnic minority students – By 2024-25, we will increase the number of ethnic minority students entering UCS to 5%

Disabled students – By 2025, we will increase the number of students with disabilities studying at UCS and ensure that the continuation rate (the proportion of students continuing to the next year of their course) is the same as that of all other students.

Care Experienced and from Military families – we plan to increase the number of students studying higher education at UCS who come from a Care setting or from a military family.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

see p18-28 of the full plan

We have a range of activities that we have already, or will introduce to achieve our aims and targets

1. Formalise our programme of work with identified target schools. This will include a STEM day on campus, GCSE revision sessions, a mentoring programme and the Higher Education Early Insight Programme to improve achievement in schools and enthuse school pupils with the idea of studying for a degree.
2. Introduce a Progress and Employability coach to provide focussed support for target students.
3. Establish Higher Apprenticeships and Vocational Skills qualifications to provide more choice in higher education with a more integrated approach to studying and learning.
4. Maintain and develop the embedded support for study throughout UCS to provide an all-round experience that includes teaching and assessment, study support and wellbeing.
5. Collaborate with our validating partner, the University of Portsmouth to provide enhanced careers advice and support.
6. Provide automatic financial support, including bursaries and hardship funding for eligible students, to reduce the burden of application.

How students can get involved

see p31-32 of the full plan

The original Plan was developed with contributions from a student working group. This group continues to meet to review progress and offer feedback on areas for development. Student representatives will be recruited annually and encouraged to share their experiences of the life as a UCS student. These experiences and their feedback will be used to make amends as needed.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

see p32-35 of full plan

Applications and enrolments from target groups are monitored monthly throughout the recruitment cycle by the HE Strategy Group and reported termly to Governors. Continuation is monitored in conjunction with attendance and reported termly to Governors to make sure that we are achieving our aims.

We will collect data on the actions described above to evaluate their impact which will be discussed at the student working group and HE Strategy group. Feedback from these meetings may be used to adjust or amend our actions. Progress against targets will be presented to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee to ensure that we are working in an inclusive and supportive way.

Feedback will be collected from the target schools to evaluate the impact of the new actions that are being introduced in schools.

Contact details for further information

For further information please contact APP@sparsholt.ac.uk

