

## **University Centre Sparsholt (UCS)** **UCS Access & Participation Plan summary (25-26 / 28-29)**

### **1. What is an Access and Participation Plan?**

The UCS Access and Participation Plan sets out the actions that Sparsholt will take to ensure that learners from all backgrounds are able to access higher education, be successful whilst studying, and progress onto a meaningful career once they have graduated.

The purpose of the Plan is to ensure equality of opportunity, so that any learner who wants to study at higher education level, and has the aptitude to do so, is supported regardless of who they are and what their life journey has been.

The Plan is a requirement of the Office for Students, but it is something that UCS embrace and are proud to offer.

You can see the full UCS Access and Participation Plan [here](#).

### **2. What are UCS aiming to achieve through the Plan?**

The UCS Access and Participation Plan has four overall aims:

1. To increase the number of people who feel that studying land-based subjects at higher education level is an option for them.
2. To increase the support that is provided to UCS students, in order to give learners the best possible chance of success on their course
3. To provide a learning environment that is conducive to good mental health for all students, and that the environment leads to successful outcomes.
4. To maximise the success of UCS graduates, ensuring that their post-University activities align with their career ambitions.

See **pages 2 - 4** to understand why UCS have identified these areas to focus on, and how they align to those risks to equality of opportunity that have been identified nationally. **Pages 5 - 6** provide more detail on objectives of the Plan.

### **3. What we are doing to address keys risks to equality of opportunity?**

In order to achieve the aims that have been set out in the Plan, UCS has designed a detailed programme of interventions. These interventions will run throughout the academic year, and will involve staff from across the University Centre.

Examples include running university taster days for local colleges in order to provide information on what it's like to study land-based education at a higher

level; recruiting new staff to provide dedicated academic support to students; training for staff on how to support students with different needs and learning styles; and launching new employability modules and awards.

See **pages 8 - 26** of the Plan for more information on the specific actions and interventions that will be carried out. Each intervention has been inspired by research and evidence of success, and the rationale for why these specific interventions have been chosen can be read on **pages 40 - 48**.

The success of the Plan will be ensured by having appropriate governance, and engagement from staff across the University. The Plan will be managed by senior leaders at UCS, who will ensure that it is embedded within everyday operations and decision making. More detail on this approach can be found on **page 27**.

#### **4. How will we measure what we have achieved?**

UCS want to understand the impact of the interventions, and whether they are contributing to the aims and objectives in the ways that are intended. To help this understanding, a programme of evaluation has been designed, specific to each intervention. **Pages 8 - 26** provide more information on these evaluation activities.

These evaluations will help UCS to review and adapt the Plan each year, and will also contribute to sector-wide knowledge of what works in improving equality.

#### **5. What fees do we charge?**

Students will pay the tuition fee that is advertised on the UCS website at the time of application, and they will pay this same fee for the duration of their course. If fees increase at a national level, this will not affect current students who have already enrolled at UCS and who are continuing their studies.

#### **6. What financial help is available?**

UCS provide a £30,000 hardship fund, which is available for students to access at times of financial difficulty.

In addition to this, and as part of this new Plan, UCS will offer bursaries to four students each year, to provide financial support to students from backgrounds that have been traditionally underrepresented in our student body. These bursaries will be flexible in terms of their use, but equivalent to half of the yearly tuition fee.

#### **7. How can students can get involved?**

UCS will establish a new 'APP Student Association' group, where student representatives will be invited to meet as a group once per term to discuss and evaluate APP progress, provide ongoing student input into the APP

*For more information on the UCS Access and Participation Plan, please email [degrees@sparsholt.ac.uk](mailto:degrees@sparsholt.ac.uk)*