UK College of Business and Computing

Access and Participation Plan

2027-28 to 2030-31

SLCC 6.11 – Version 1.0 – October 2026

Introduction and strategic aim

UKCBC serves a diverse student population drawn predominantly from groups that are underrepresented in higher education or may face barriers to participation and success. This includes students from areas of socioeconomic deprivation, mature students, commuter students, students with childcare or caring responsibilities, students from ethnic minority communities, disabled students and those whose educational journeys have been disrupted. Many students balance study alongside employment, family responsibilities and caring commitments.

UKCBC empowers students and communities by providing accessible, career focused higher education grounded in applied and authentic learning. By developing confidence, knowledge and capability, we enable students to realise their ambitions, enhance their employability and contribute meaningfully to the social and economic prosperity of their communities and the wider economy.

Strategy 2030 is structured around four interconnected pillars that define how UKCBC delivers its mission:

- Our Approach to Education
- Our People
- Our Learning Community
- Our Operational Excellence

The strategic aim of this APP is to reduce inequalities in access, success and progression by identifying and removing barriers that disproportionately affect underrepresented and disadvantaged students, while strengthening the conditions that enable all students to thrive and achieve equitable outcomes throughout their educational journey.

This Access and Participation Plan (APP) translates UKCBC's mission into a focused strategy for promoting equality of opportunity across access, student success and progression. The Plan sets out how the College will identify, address and remove barriers that may prevent students from accessing higher education, achieving positive outcomes during their studies and progressing into employment, enterprise or further study, through applied, authentic and career focused learning.

The APP is closely aligned with UKCBC's Strategy 2030 and reflects the College's commitment to inclusive teaching and learning, personalised student support, meaningful student voice, authentic employer and community engagement, and robust governance informed by evidence and data. Through this integrated approach, UKCBC seeks to create an environment in which all students, regardless of background or circumstance, have the opportunity to succeed and realise their potential.

UKCBC therefore adopts a whole provider approach to equality of opportunity, recognising that student success is shaped by the cumulative impact of support, access, continuation, attainment and progression. Through targeted interventions and evidence informed practice, the College seeks to remove barriers, enhance student outcomes and ensure that all students are equipped to achieve their academic, professional and personal aspirations. In this context, equality of opportunity depends not only on who enrols, but also on whether information is clear before entry, support is accessible early, teaching and assessment are inclusive, provision is sufficiently flexible, financial and wellbeing support is visible, and progression support is practical and closely connected to local employers and further study routes.

This commitment reflects UKCBC's belief that widening participation alone is insufficient unless it is accompanied by equitable outcomes. Through applied, authentic and career focused higher education, the

College seeks to ensure that all students have the opportunity to access, succeed and progress, while contributing positively to their communities and the wider economy.

Risks to equality of opportunity

UKCBC has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of equality of opportunity risks using the Office for Students Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), internal Access and Participation performance data, progression evidence, student voice, staff consultation, operational performance information and emerging student consultation findings. This assessment has enabled the College to identify and prioritise the most significant and actionable risks affecting access, success and progression across the student lifecycle, ensuring that the interventions and strategic priorities set out in this APP are proportionate, evidence based and responsive to the needs of current and prospective students.

Through this process the College has identified three broad categories that inform the design and targeting of APP activity:

Category	*Focus*
Core target groups	Disabled students, male students, Black students and students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2
Mission related groups	Commuter students, students with childcare and caring responsibilities
Cross cutting barriers	Mental health, wellbeing and financial hardship

Risks 1–4 are evidence based APP priorities, while Risks 5–7 are cross cutting risks affecting multiple student groups and are treated as monitored and emerging priorities. The table below summarises the relationship between identified risks and the objectives through which they will be addressed.

Risk	*Lifecycle*	*Targeted Objective*
Disability access, disclosure and success	Access	PTA_1
Socioeconomic disadvantage and graduate progression	Progression	PTP_1, PTS_3
Male	Success	PTS_1
Black students	Success	PTS_2
Caring responsibilities	Cross lifecycle	PTS_3, PTA_1
Commuting, travel and cost of living	Cross lifecycle	PTS_4, PTA_1
Mental health and wellbeing	Cross lifecycle	PTS_5

Risk 1: Lower Participation, Disclosure and Success Among Disabled Students

Disabled students represent 9.1% of entrants, significantly below sector expectations and suggesting both access and disclosure barriers. UKCBC considers this to reflect both potential barriers to access and possible under disclosure of disability prior to enrolment.

Prospective students may be unaware of available support, may not identify as disabled, or may be reluctant to disclose support needs before enrolment. There is therefore a risk that disabled students are not receiving timely information, guidance and transition support necessary to enable successful entry into higher education.

The College also recognises that some disabled applicants may decide not to apply if support arrangements and accessibility information are not sufficiently visible during the recruitment and admissions process.

Risk 2: Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Graduate Progression

Graduates from areas of higher deprivation are less likely to progress into positive graduate outcomes than students from less deprived backgrounds. This may reflect the combined effects of financial pressures, reduced social capital, caring responsibilities, employment commitments and limited access to professional networks.

These factors create a continuing risk that socioeconomic disadvantage influences outcomes beyond graduation. Students from areas of higher deprivation may also have less access to graduate mobility opportunities, professional contacts and unpaid developmental experiences that support progression.

Risk 3: Male Students Underperform Compared with Non Male Students

Current success data indicates that male students underperform when compared to non male students, by around 6.5 percentage points less.

The specific causal factors underlying the male student continuation, completion and attainment gap at UKCBC have not yet been established through longitudinal outcome data, given the scale at which the College currently operates and the absence of a mature qualifying student dataset at this stage of its development. The intervention design for Intervention Strategy 3 is therefore grounded in the EORR risk categories most robustly associated with differential male student outcomes at sector level, specifically insufficient academic support, insufficient personal support, and barriers to belonging and engagement, which represent the most appropriate available mechanism for intervention design in the absence of provider specific causal evidence. Staff consultation at UKCBC is consistent with this framing, with academic and support staff identifying male students as less likely to engage proactively with academic and pastoral support — a pattern well documented at sector level and directly aligned to the EORR risk categories noted above. The activities within Intervention Strategy 3 are designed to address these mechanisms through targeted belonging and engagement initiatives, peer mentoring, academic coaching, and inclusive teaching and assessment development. The first cohort engagement programme described in the Student Consultation and Partnership section will provide the first direct qualifying student evidence of the specific causal factors at UKCBC, and the formal variation commitment made within that section ensures that Intervention strategy three will be refined if first cohort findings indicate that a different or more specific mechanism is required.

Risk 4: Black Students Underperform Compared with Non Black Students

Current attainment and completion data indicates that Black students experience lower academic success outcomes than non Black students. These differences may reflect barriers relating to belonging, engagement, support utilisation and access to social capital. Although there are other indicative trends, Black students were prioritised because they demonstrated the most consistent differential outcome across attainment and completion indicators, currently 7.4% nationally. Without targeted support, these disparities risk persisting.

Cross Cutting and Emerging Risks

Risk 5: Caring Responsibilities and Reduced Opportunity to Engage

Internal student profile data indicate that 97% of UKCBC students are mature students often balancing study alongside childcare, family commitments or wider caring responsibilities.

There is a risk that these students have less time available for study, engagement activities, academic support, enrichment opportunities and assessment preparation. Caring responsibilities may also increase stress, financial pressure and the likelihood of interruption to study.

Until more robust data collection is established, there remains a risk that the scale of this challenge is not fully understood.

Risk 6: Commuting, Travel and Cost of Living

The vast majority of UKCBC students commute to campus. Travel costs and transport availability may affect attendance, engagement, participation in enrichment activities, placement opportunities and progression related events.

Students facing high travel costs may experience reduced engagement with their course and wider university life, creating inequalities in both academic and progression outcomes.

Risk 7: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health and wellbeing challenges represent a cross cutting risk affecting multiple stages of the student lifecycle. Operational insight, staff feedback and student consultation indicate that mental health difficulties can affect attendance, engagement, continuation, attainment and progression.

Mental health challenges often intersect with disability, financial hardship, commuting pressures, employment commitments and caring responsibilities, creating compounded disadvantage for some students.

Objectives

The following objectives respond directly to the equality of opportunity risks identified through UKCBC's assessment of performance and provide the framework for intervention, investment, monitoring and evaluation throughout the plan period.

Numerical targets have been established for PTA_1 PTS_1, PTS_2, PTP_1 and are set out within the accompanying FIT workbook. These targets provide the primary mechanism through which progress against

APP objectives will be monitored and evaluated. FIT trajectories were determined using baseline performance, cohort size, historical variation, anticipated intervention reach and judgement regarding achievable but stretching improvement over the plan period.

PTS_3, PTS_4, PTS_5 are monitored objectives. While current evidence supports intervention and evaluation activity, cohort sizes and data maturity do not yet support robust numerical target setting. Progress will therefore be assessed through intervention participation, outcome monitoring, evaluation evidence and annual review. The College will track interim indicators, including intervention participation and reach, and continuation, completion and attainment gap trends disaggregated by characteristic and commits to establishing numerical FIT targets through a plan variation once the 2027-28 baseline cohort has matured and subgroup sizes permit robust target setting, and by the 2028-29 monitoring return at the latest.

Access Objectives

Objective 1 (PTA_1): Improve Participation and Disclosure Among Disabled Students

To increase disability disclosure and improve access for disabled applicants by providing accessible information, earlier opportunities to disclose support needs, accessible recruitment processes and enhanced transition support. This objective aims to ensure that disabled students receive timely support before barriers begin to affect their participation, engagement or academic success.

Progression and Success Objectives

Objective 2 (PTP_1): Improve Graduate Progression for Students from Areas of Socioeconomic Disadvantage

To reduce socioeconomic progression gaps by supporting students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 through targeted bursaries, employability support, employer connections, progression guidance and practical support that reduces financial and social barriers to graduate progression.

Objective 3 (PTS_1): Reduce Continuation, Completion and Attainment Gaps Affecting Male Students

To reduce differential continuation, completion and attainment outcomes affecting male students through evidence informed interventions that strengthen belonging, engagement, academic confidence and participation in support throughout the student lifecycle.

Objective 4 (PTS_2): Reduce Continuation, Completion and Attainment Gaps Affecting Black Students

To reduce differential continuation, completion and attainment outcomes affecting Black students through evidence informed interventions that strengthen belonging, engagement, academic confidence and participation in support throughout the student lifecycle.

Objective 5 (PTS_3): Reduce the Impact of Caring Responsibilities and Childcare Commitments on Student Outcomes

To reduce the impact of caring responsibilities and childcare commitments on student participation, academic engagement and outcomes. This objective will focus on improving awareness and uptake of support services for students with caring responsibilities, strengthening referral pathways and flexibility in academic delivery, and improving institutional understanding of caring related barriers through enhanced data collection, student insight and evaluation to inform future target setting and intervention design.

Objective 6 (PTS_4): Reduce the Impact of Commuting, Travel and Cost of Living

To reduce the impact of commuting challenges, travel costs and associated cost of living pressures on student attendance, participation and outcomes. This objective will focus on improving awareness of travel related financial support, strengthening practical assistance for commuter students, reviewing timetabling and catch up arrangements to support students affected by transport disruption and travel costs, and developing a more robust evidence base on commuter related barriers through improved data collection, student insight and evaluation to inform future target setting and intervention design.

Cross Lifecycle Objectives

Objective 7 (PTS_5): Improve Student Engagement and Attendance through Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

To reduce the impact of mental health and wellbeing challenges on student attendance, engagement, continuation and attainment. This objective will focus on strengthening referral pathways, improving staff capability in identifying and supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties, enhancing

partnerships with specialist wellbeing services, and improving institutional understanding of the extent and nature of mental health barriers through enhanced disclosure routes, service uptake data, student insight and evaluation and developing a more robust evidence base on barriers through improved data collection, student insight and evaluation to inform future target setting and intervention design.

Through these objectives, UKCBC seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable student experience, ensuring that students from all backgrounds have an equal opportunity to access higher education, succeed during their studies and progress successfully into employment or further learning. Collectively, these objectives provide the framework through which UKCBC will deliver its commitment to reducing inequalities in opportunity and outcomes across the student lifecycle.

Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

The following intervention strategies provide the primary mechanisms through which UKCBC will address the equality of opportunity risks identified through its assessment of performance and deliver the objectives set out within this Access and Participation Plan.

The intervention strategies have been prioritised based on UKCBC's assessment of performance, Equality of Opportunity Risk Register analysis, student voice evidence and consideration of the provider context described within this Plan.

Each intervention strategy is supported by an underlying theory of change that identifies the equality of opportunity risk being addressed, the intended mechanism of change and the outcomes expected to contribute towards achievement of APP objectives.

Evaluation findings will be reported annually through the College's APP governance arrangements and used to determine whether interventions should be continued, refined, scaled or discontinued. Effective practice will be embedded within mainstream provision where appropriate.

Intervention Strategy	*Objectives Supported*
Inclusive Pathways	PTA_1, PTS_3, PTS_4, PTS_5
Disability Confidence	PTA_1, PTS_5
Inclusive Success, Belonging and Student Achievement	PTS_1, PTS_2
Mental Health, Caring Responsibilities and Cost of Study Support	PTS_3, PTS_4, PTS_5
Progression, Employability and Graduate Opportunity	PTP_1, PTS_3, PTS_4, PTS_5

Intervention Strategy 1: Inclusive Pathways, Information and Access

Objectives Supported

PTA_1 Disabled Students; PTS_3 Caring; PTS_4 Commuting; PTS_5 Mental Health

Strategic Purpose

This strategy aims to improve access to higher education for groups currently underrepresented at UKCBC, particularly disabled students, while supporting mature students, commuter students and those with caring, financial or wellbeing related barriers. It directly supports Access Objective PTA_1 and the cross cutting objectives PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5 by improving access to information and support into higher education.

Estimated Costs - £145,000

Contribution to the national priority on raising pre entry attainment

UKCBC recognises that raising the attainment of disadvantaged learners before entry to higher education is a national priority for access and participation, and that the Office for Students expects providers to have regard to this priority through strategic, evidence led engagement with schools, colleges and other pre entry partners. The College's contribution is necessarily proportionate to its size, mission and recruitment profile. As a smaller, career focused provider that recruits predominately mature learners and from within the local community rather than directly from the further education sector, UKCBC does not consider direct pre-16 attainment raising delivery to be the most effective or proportionate use of its resources.

Instead, UKCBC will contribute to the national priority by working with further education, sixth form, employer and community partnerships to support attainment, study readiness and informed progression among learners in its principal recruitment pipeline. This includes collaborative activity with partner colleges to strengthen subject knowledge, academic confidence and preparedness for higher level study, alongside the information, guidance and supported disclosure activity set out in this strategy. Any attainment related activity will be designed with a clear intended outcome, evaluated in line with the evaluation framework set out in this Plan and reported through

APP governance. UKCBC will keep the case for more direct school and college attainment partnerships under review over the life of the Plan, particularly where local need and partnership opportunities align with the College's mission.

Risks to Equality of Opportunity Addressed

The strategy addresses barriers relating to information and guidance, perceptions of higher education, disability disclosure, application and enrolment processes, limited flexibility of provision, financial pressures, caring responsibilities, commuting costs and wellbeing concerns.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Provide flexible applicant guidance through evening, weekend and online information sessions.	**Marketing and Communications:** • Targeting Marketing at Commuter, care, disabilities (Opportunities). • Production of Accessible Information. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Student Ambassadors.	**Short term:** Increased applications and enrolments from sector underrepresented groups and specifically for UKCBC Disabled Learners; improved awareness of support services. **Medium term:** Improved enquiry to application conversion and offer acceptance. **Long term:** A more representative student population; contributes to PTA_1.	Yes Strategy 2 PTS_3/2/3.
Improve admissions and enrolment processes to build applicant confidence and encourage earlier disclosure of disability and support needs.	**Staff Development:** • All staff Disability Confidence training on support available. **Marketing and Communications:** • A challenge assumptions campaign.	**Short term:** Increased early disclosure of disability and support needs enabling timely reasonable adjustments and improved continuation and student success. **Medium term:** Support arrangements in place before enrolment; improved transition readiness. **Long term:** Increased disability disclosure rates, contributing to PTA_1.	Yes Strategy 2.
Offer accessible information and named contacts for prospective students requiring additional support.	**Marketing and Communications:** • Targeting Marketing at Commuter, care, disabilities (Opportunities). • Accessible Website. • Alternative Formats for all Marketing Collateral. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Engagement with disabled applicants and groups. **Staffing resource:** • Named disability ambassadors who will act as transition coaches. • Dedicated outreach team. • Education team and resources. **Staff Development:** • Disability Confidence training.	**Short term:** Improved awareness of support; earlier contact from students needing support. **Medium term:** Improved offer acceptance and enrolment among disabled students. **Long term:** Improved support awareness across caring, commuting and wellbeing barriers; contributes to PTA_1, PTS_3/2/3.	Yes Strategies 2 and 4.

Review the flexibility and accessibility of programme delivery, including blended and alternative study options where appropriate.	**Leadership and Management:** • Quality Assurance Processes. • Curriculum Review Groups. • Review of Learning Technology. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Student Consultation.	**Short term:** Increased participation in flexible and blended options. **Medium term:** Improved completion and continuation for carers, commuters and disabled students. **Long term:** Improved continuation, completion and attainment by reducing barriers to participation; contributes to PTA_1 and PTS_3/2/3.	Yes Strategies 3 and 4.
Strengthen partnerships with further education providers, employers and community organisations to raise awareness of higher education opportunities and support progression into study.	**Marketing and Communications:** • Event Attendance. • Progression Events. • Accessible Website. • Community Networks. **Staffing resource:** • Dedicated outreach team. • Education team and resources. **Other:** • Partnership agreements. • Outreach and engagement officer function defined within teams. • Employer Engagement.	**Short term:** Increased awareness of HE opportunities among prospective students in the recruitment pipeline. **Medium term:** Improved enquiry to application conversion and stronger progression routes into study. **Long term:** A more representative intake; supports the national attainment raising priority and PTA_1.	Yes Strategy 5; national attainment raising priority.
Improve pre entry information relating to study expectations, travel requirements, financial support, childcare, wellbeing services and hardship provision.	**Marketing and Communications:** • Challenge of Assumptions About Study Campaign. • Did you know all the services campaigns. • Sharing of success stories highlighting current and former students that have overcome challenges. **Other:** • Website development. • Student Ambassadors.	**Short term:** Improved awareness of support services; earlier disclosure of needs. Ensuring right information to make an informed decision **Medium term:** Improved transition readiness, offer acceptance and enrolment. **Long term:** Improved support awareness across caring, commuting and wellbeing barriers; contributes to PTA_1, PTS_3/2/3.	Yes Strategy 4 PTS_3/2/3.

Evidence Base and Rationale

The strategy is informed by UKCBC access data, Equality of Opportunity Risk Register analysis, staff consultation, student voice evidence and Strategy 2030. Evidence indicates that information barriers, uncertainty about support, competing work and family commitments, commuting challenges and financial concerns can reduce participation among underrepresented groups.

Evaluation

Evaluation Approach: UKCBC will use a proportionate evaluation strategy based primarily on **Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry)** methods to assess implementation, reach and early outcomes. Evaluation will combine quantitative institutional data with qualitative learner feedback to understand how interventions contribute to reducing equality of

opportunity risks. Where sufficient longitudinal data becomes available, selected interventions will be strengthened through **Type 3 (Causal Evaluation**) to assess the extent to which observed changes can be attributed to the intervention.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation
Participation in applicant guidance activities.	Increased participation by target groups in pre entry engagement activities and improved conversion to application and enrolment.	Attendance records, demographic analysis, applicant feedback surveys and conversion analysis from attendance to application and enrolment. **Type 2**.
Enquiry, application, offer and enrolment trends.	Increased applications, offers and enrolments from underrepresented groups, particularly disabled students.	Analysis of admissions and enrolment data, equality monitoring, year on year trend analysis and comparison with institutional benchmarks. **Type 2**.
Disability disclosure rates and timing of support planning.	Increased early disclosure of disability and earlier implementation of reasonable adjustments and support plans.	Monitoring disclosure rates, timing of disclosure, support implementation timescales and continuation data. Student feedback on transition support. **Type 2.**
Student and applicant perceptions of accessibility and support.	Improved perceptions of accessibility, inclusivity and confidence in accessing support services.	Applicant and student surveys, focus groups, learner voice activities and qualitative thematic analysis. **Type 2.**
Participation patterns across different delivery models.	Increased participation and continuation amongst students benefiting from flexible and blended delivery options.	Analysis of participation, continuation, attendance and attainment across different modes of study, disaggregated by student characteristics. **Type 2** and **Type 3** where sufficient longitudinal data exists.

Intervention Strategy 2: Disability Confidence and Supported Transition

Objectives Supported

PTA_1 Disabled Students; PTS_ 5 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Strategic Purpose

This strategy aims to improve equality of opportunity for disabled students by creating a more accessible, inclusive and coordinated support experience from enquiry through to graduate progression. It directly supports PTA_1 by addressing barriers associated with disability disclosure and access to support, with cross lifecycle benefits for disabled student continuation, attainment and progression. It also supports PTS_5 by recognising and responding to the intersection between disability and mental health and wellbeing challenges.

Estimated Costs - £120,000

Risks to Equality of Opportunity Addressed

The strategy addresses risks relating to information and guidance, insufficient academic and personal support, mental health and wellbeing, financial pressures and progression from higher education. It also recognises the interaction between disability, caring responsibilities, financial hardship and participation barriers.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Provide accessible information on disability support, reasonable adjustments, wellbeing	**Staff Development:** • All staff Disability Confidence training on support available.	**Short term:** Increased disability disclosure and earlier engagement with support services; improved awareness of available support and greater confidence in help seeking.	Yes Strategy 1 (access/disclosure).

services and assistive technologies, supported by a named contact from enquiry onwards.	**Staffing resource:** • Named support coach. **Marketing and Communications:** • On campus disclosure and support service campaigns.	**Medium term:** Timely implementation of support plans and adjustments. **Long term:** Reduced disability related gaps in access and across the lifecycle; contributes to PTA_1 and PTS_5.	
Strengthen early identification of support needs through structured support planning discussions and timely implementation of adjustments.		**Short term:** Earlier engagement with support services. **Medium term:** Timely implementation of support plans and reasonable adjustments; improved attendance, engagement and belonging. **Long term:** Improved attainment, completion and progression for disabled students; contributes to PTA_1.	Yes Strategy 1 PTS_5.
Develop inclusive learning, teaching and assessment practices through staff development, accessible learning materials and effective use of blended learning.	**Staff Development:** • All staff inclusivity training. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Engagement with disabled students and groups during assessment and course design. • Course design to include consideration for learning methods .	**Short term:** Increased staff awareness of inclusive practice. **Medium term:** Enhanced staff capability in inclusive practice; improved engagement, belonging and access to learning opportunities. **Long term:** Improved attainment and completion for disabled students; contributes to PTA_1.	Yes Strategy 3 (inclusive success).
Involve students in identifying barriers and improving accessibility across learning environments.	**Leadership and Management:** • Quality Committee. **Student Engagement Activities:** • EDI committee within the student council. • Student voice feedback. • Students' Union. **Marketing and Communications:** • Disability Confidence campaign. • Accessibility Audits. • Learner Surveys.	**Short term:** Barriers identified through student voice. **Medium term:** Improved sense of belonging and student engagement; accessibility improvements implemented **Long term:** Continuous improvement in accessibility, contributing to improved attainment, completion and progression; supports PTA_1 and PTS_5.	Yes Strategy 3.
Embed disability inclusive careers education, coaching, mentoring and employer engagement to support progression into employment or further study.	**Staff Development:** • Career staff development to support disabled students into the workplace. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Disability Confidence career mentoring. • Disability employability preparation and work placements. **Marketing and Communications:** • Disabled student success story celebration activity. • Alumni mentoring Programme.	**Short term:** Increased engagement with careers and progression support among disabled students. **Medium term:** Increased participation in careers activities and improved career confidence. **Long term:** Improved progression into graduate employment or further study; reduced progression gaps for disabled students; contributes to PTA_1.	Yes Strategy 5 (progression).

Evidence Base and Rationale

UKCBC's data identify disability as the most significant equality of opportunity challenge across access, success and progression. Disabled students experience lower participation, completion, attainment and progression outcomes than non disabled students.
The strategy is informed by Strategy 2030, staff consultation and student feedback, all of which highlight the importance of early intervention, coordinated support and inclusive practice. National evidence indicates that early disclosure, proactive support planning, inclusive curriculum design and targeted transition support can improve outcomes for disabled students.

Evaluation

UKCBC will evaluate these interventions using a proportionate **Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry)** approach, combining institutional data, learner feedback and qualitative evidence to assess implementation, reach and contribution to equality of opportunity. Evaluation findings will be reviewed annually through the College's governance framework and used to refine interventions through continuous improvement. Where sufficient longitudinal evidence becomes available, selected interventions will be strengthened through **Type 3 (Causal Evaluation)** to better understand the impact on continuation, completion and progression outcomes for disabled students.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation
Disability disclosure rates and engagement with support services.	Increased disability disclosure, earlier engagement with support services and improved awareness of available support.	Analysis of disability disclosure data, timing of disclosure, support service utilisation, enquiries and referrals, disaggregated by student characteristics. Student surveys on awareness of support. **Type 2**.
Timeliness of support planning and implementation of adjustments.	Earlier implementation of reasonable adjustments, improved transition into study and increased engagement with learning.	Monitoring time from disclosure to support plan completion, implementation of reasonable adjustments, case audits and student feedback on timeliness and effectiveness of support. **Type 2**.
Student feedback on accessibility, support and learning experiences.	Improved student confidence, belonging, accessibility and satisfaction with learning and support services.	Student surveys, focus groups, learner forums, module evaluations and thematic analysis of qualitative feedback. Comparison across student groups where appropriate. **Type 2**.
Accessibility reviews, curriculum audits and inclusive practice development.	Enhanced staff capability in inclusive practice and improved accessibility of learning, teaching and assessment.	Accessibility audits, curriculum reviews, staff self assessment, observation of teaching, CPD participation and implementation monitoring. **Type 2**.
Participation in progression activities, confidence measures and graduate outcomes.	Increased participation in careers support, improved confidence and enhanced progression into employment or further study for disabled students.	Participation data for careers, mentoring and employer engagement activities; pre- and post intervention confidence surveys; graduate outcomes and progression data analysed by student characteristic. **Type 2**, **Type 3** (Causal Evaluation) where longitudinal evidence allows.

Intervention Strategy 3: Inclusive Success, Belonging and Student Achievement

Objectives Supported

PTS_1 Male Student Success; PTS_2 Black Student Success

Strategic Purpose

This strategy aims to improve continuation, completion and attainment outcomes by strengthening academic engagement, belonging, confidence and access to support. It responds directly to differential success outcomes identified for male students and Black students and seeks to reduce barriers that may affect engagement, participation and achievement.

Estimated Costs - £175,000

Risks to Equality of Opportunity Addressed

- Male students underperform compared to non male students.
- Black students experience lower academic success outcomes than non Black students.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Develop targeted belonging and engagement initiatives.	Student Experience Team, Students' Union, enrichment activities, wellbeing services, student communities and events. **Staff Development:** • All staff training on Mental Health Awareness. **Estates:** • On campus charity spaces dedicated to belonging and male mental health. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Targeted activity to build male belonging and low barrier spaces that encourage help seeking and address masculinity norms that can discourage it, designed to build engagement without being framed explicitly as support. • Peer led men's wellness sessions. • Peer led social campaigns and podcast. • Role model activity and alumni engagement showcasing Black male business leaders.	**Short term:** Improved sense of belonging and increased engagement with the institution. **Medium term:** Increased academic confidence and participation in learning. **Long term:** Reduced success gaps for male and Black students; improved continuation, completion and attainment (PTS_1, PTS_2).	Yes Strategy 2.
Expand peer mentoring and role model programmes.	**Student Engagement Activities:** • Peer Mentors. • Student Ambassadors. • Develop UKCBC Alumni. • Mentoring training. • Coordinated Mentoring Programme.	**Short term:** Increased participation in mentoring and academic support. **Medium term:** Improved confidence, motivation and engagement with study. **Long term:** Reduced success gaps for male and Black students; improved continuation and attainment (PTS_1, PTS_2).	Yes Strategy 5.

Increase access to academic coaching and study skills support.	**Staff Development:** • Charity linked staff training on challenges facing Black students' engagement with institutional systems. **Estates:** • Develop safe spaces that tackle issues around asking for help. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Targeted activity to build male belonging, designed to build engagement without being framed explicitly as support.	**Short term:** Increased participation in academic support. **Medium term:** Improved assessment submission, academic confidence and study behaviours. **Long term:** Improved attainment and continuation.	Yes Strategy 1.

Evidence Base and Rationale

This strategy responds to differential continuation, completion and attainment outcomes affecting male students and Black students. UKCBC's assessment of performance identifies lower success outcomes for male students compared with non male students and lower attainment and completion outcomes for Black students compared with non Black students. Although the precise causes of these differentials require further investigation, institutional evidence, student consultation and sector research suggest that academic engagement, sense of belonging, support utilisation, confidence, representation and access to social capital can influence student success.

The strategy is based on the principle that students are more likely to succeed when they feel connected to their learning community, engage actively with academic support and can access positive mentoring relationships and role models. Evidence from the Office for Students Equality of Opportunity Risk Register and wider higher education research indicates that belonging, engagement, academic confidence and support utilisation are important contributors to continuation, completion and attainment outcomes, particularly for students who may experience barriers to participation or inclusion.

The design of the strategy therefore combines targeted belonging activity, peer mentoring, academic coaching, inclusive teaching and assessment approaches, student voice activity and progression focused support to address multiple factors that may contribute to differential outcomes. These interventions are intended both to improve outcomes directly and to strengthen institutional understanding of the factors affecting success for male students and Black students.

The expected mechanism of change is that increased belonging, engagement and participation in academic support will contribute to improved attendance, assessment participation, continuation, completion and attainment outcomes. Through ongoing evaluation and student consultation, UKCBC will continue to refine interventions and strengthen understanding of the causes of differential outcomes throughout the life of the Plan.

This strategy directly supports PTS_1 and PTS_2 and contributes to UKCBC's commitment to reducing inequalities in student success through inclusive, evidence informed and student centred approaches.

Taken together, these approaches are intended to ensure that male students, Black students and other students at greater risk of lower success can participate fully and achieve positive outcomes regardless of personal circumstances.

Evaluation

Evaluation Approach: Evaluation will use a proportionate Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry) methodology, combining quantitative institutional performance data with qualitative learner feedback to assess implementation, reach and contribution to improved equality of opportunity. Data will be disaggregated by student characteristic to assess progress in reducing identified success gaps. Findings will be reviewed annually through the College's governance framework and used to inform continuous improvement. As longitudinal evidence accumulates over the lifetime of the Access and Participation Plan, selected measures (particularly continuation, completion and attainment) will support more robust impact analysis in line with the OfS Standards of Evidence.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation
Attendance and engagement monitoring.	Improved attendance, engagement and early identification of students at risk of lower academic success.	Analysis of attendance records, VLE engagement, tutorial participation and learner engagement dashboards, disaggregated by student characteristic. **Type 2.**
Assessment submission rates.	Improved assessment submission, academic engagement and progression through modules.	Analysis of submission and resubmission rates, module level performance and engagement with academic support, disaggregated by target group. **Type 2.**
Continuation rates.	Improved continuation for male students, Black students and other identified target groups.	Annual analysis of continuation rates using institutional student data, benchmark comparisons and equality of opportunity monitoring. **Type 2.**
Completion rates.	Increased course completion and reduced withdrawal among target groups.	Cohort tracking, completion analysis and comparison by student characteristic against institutional and sector benchmarks. **Type 2.**
Attainment outcomes.	Reduced attainment gaps and improved academic success for male and Black students.	Analysis of attainment classifications, module achievement, award outcomes and degree classifications by student characteristic. **Type 2**, progressing towards **Type 3** where sufficient longitudinal evidence exists.
Student belonging surveys.	Improved sense of belonging, academic confidence and engagement with learning.	Student surveys, pulse surveys, focus groups and qualitative thematic analysis exploring belonging, inclusion and confidence. **Type 2**.

Intervention Strategy 4: Mental Health, Caring Responsibilities and Cost of Study Support

Objectives Supported

PTS_3 Caring Responsibilities; PTS_4 Commuting, Travel and Cost of Living; PTS_5 Mental Health and Wellbeing

Strategic Purpose

This strategy aims to reduce practical, financial and wellbeing barriers that affect participation, engagement, continuation and attainment.

Estimated Costs - £111,000

Risks to Equality of Opportunity Addressed

- Caring responsibilities.
- Commuting and travel costs.
- Mental health and wellbeing.
- Financial hardship.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Strengthen early identification of students experiencing practical participation barriers.	**Leadership and Management:** • Investment in early identification and engagement tracking on Student record system. **Student Engagement Activities:** • Assignment of personal tutors.	**Short term:** Earlier identification of practical barriers and increased awareness of available support. **Medium term:** Improved engagement and attendance through timely intervention.	Yes Strategy 1.

Provide targeted support for students with caring responsibilities.	**Student Engagement Activities:** • Parent and Carers Support Network. • Advance communication of planned timetables and Fixed study days.	**Short term:** Increased awareness and uptake of support. **Medium term:** Reduced impact of caring responsibilities on attendance and engagement. **Long term:** Improved continuation and attainment.	Yes Strategy 1.
Enhance mental health referral pathways and wellbeing support.	**Staff Development:** • Staff training of mental health first aiders. • All staff mental health awareness. **Estates:** • Space on campus for charity operations supporting mental health awareness campaigns. **Marketing and Communications:** • Mental health marketing and awareness campaigns on campus. **Student Engagement:** • Free student access to mindful & mental health support applications.	**Short term:** Earlier access to wellbeing support. **Medium term:** Improved wellbeing, attendance and engagement. **Long term:** Improved continuation and reduced withdrawal associated with wellbeing concerns.	Yes Strategy 2.
Improve support for commuter students.	**Student Engagement Support:** • Travel Bursary of up to £250 to support public transport costs. • Advance communication of planned timetables and Fixed study days. • On site laptop loan facilities.	**Short term:** Increased awareness and uptake of commuter support. **Medium term:** Improved attendance, participation and sense of belonging. **Long term:** Reduced participation barriers associated with travel.	Yes Strategy 2.
Provide travel assistance and childcare support.	**Student Engagement Support:** • Travel Bursary of up to £250 to support public transport costs. • Financial guidance throughout the application processes. • Sign posting to external support agencies.	**Short term:** Increased awareness and uptake of financial support. **Medium term:** Reduced financial and practical barriers affecting participation. **Long term:** Improved continuation, attainment and progression.	Yes Strategy 2.
Strengthen staff capability to identify and respond to wellbeing concerns.	**Staff Development:** • Staff training of mental health first aiders. • All staff mental health awareness. **Marketing and Communications:** • Mental health marketing and awareness campaigns on campus. **Estates:** • Space on campus for charity operations supporting mental health and awareness campaigns.	**Medium term:** Earlier identification of students requiring support and improved staff confidence in responding to wellbeing concerns. **Long term:** Improved student engagement, continuation and success.	Yes Strategy 2.

Develop improved data collection and evaluation relating to these barriers.	**Leadership and Management:** • Investment in student engagement tracking & dashboards.	**Short term:** Improved understanding of participation barriers. **Medium term:** Better targeting of interventions and resource allocation. **Long term:** Reduced impact of caring, commuting and wellbeing barriers, supporting progress against PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5.	Yes Strategy 2.

Evidence Base and Rationale

This strategy responds to evidence from staff consultation, student voice, operational insight and the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register which indicate that caring responsibilities, childcare commitments, commuting pressures, travel costs, financial hardship and mental health challenges can affect attendance, engagement, continuation, attainment and progression.

UKCBC's student profile includes a substantial proportion of mature learners balancing study alongside employment, family responsibilities and caring commitments. These factors can reduce opportunities to engage with learning, academic support, enrichment activities and progression opportunities.

Mental health and wellbeing challenges may also intersect with disability, financial hardship, commuting pressures and caring responsibilities, creating compounded disadvantage for some students.

The strategy therefore combines practical support, financial assistance, wellbeing interventions and enhanced referral pathways to reduce barriers to participation and success while strengthening institutional understanding of these risks through improved data collection and evaluation.

The expected mechanism of change is that earlier identification of barriers, increased awareness of support and timely intervention will improve attendance, engagement, continuation and attainment outcomes. Evaluation findings will be used to strengthen the evidence base and inform future target setting.

This strategy directly supports PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5 and contributes to UKCBC's commitment to addressing the practical and wellbeing related barriers that affect equality of opportunity.

Evaluation

Evaluation Approach: UKCBC will evaluate these interventions using a Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry) methodology, combining institutional management information with qualitative student feedback to assess implementation, reach and contribution to reducing practical participation barriers. Data will be disaggregated by relevant student characteristics where appropriate and reviewed annually through the College's Access and Participation governance arrangements. Evaluation findings will inform continuous improvement, resource allocation and future refinement of interventions, supporting progress against PTS_3 (caring responsibilities), PTS_4 (commuting and cost of living) and PTS_5 (mental health and wellbeing).

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation
Support uptake.	Increased awareness and utilisation of support services, with earlier engagement by students experiencing practical participation barriers.	Analysis of referrals, service utilisation, appointments attended and uptake of support services, disaggregated by student characteristic. **Type 2.**
Commuter funding utilisation.	Increased uptake of financial support, reducing financial barriers to participation and continuation.	Analysis of bursary, hardship and travel support applications, awards, uptake rates and recipient outcomes, supported by student feedback. **Type 2.**
Attendance and engagement.	Improved attendance, participation and engagement among students receiving targeted support.	Monitoring of attendance, VLE engagement, tutorial participation and learner engagement dashboards, compared across target groups where appropriate. **Type 2.**

Wellbeing referrals.	Earlier identification of wellbeing needs and timely access to appropriate support services.	Analysis of referral volumes, referral times, service access, completion of support plans and student outcomes, supplemented by case reviews. **Type 2.**
Student survey findings.	Improved awareness of support, reduced impact of practical barriers and increased confidence in accessing services.	Student surveys, pulse surveys and thematic analysis of responses relating to wellbeing, financial support, commuting, caring responsibilities and institutional support. **Type 2.**
Qualitative student feedback.	Improved understanding of barriers to participation and the effectiveness of institutional support, informing continuous enhancement.	Focus groups, learner forums, interviews and case studies exploring student experiences of support services and participation barriers. Qualitative thematic analysis. **Type 2.**

Intervention Strategy 5: Progression, Employability and Graduate Opportunity

Objectives Supported

PTP_1 Socioeconomic disadvantage and graduate progression; PTS_3 Caring Responsibilities; PTS_4 Commuting, travel and cost of living; PTS_5 Mental health and wellbeing

Strategic Purpose

This strategy aims to improve progression outcomes for students who experience the greatest disadvantage in accessing graduate employment, further study and other positive progression opportunities. It directly supports PTP_1 by addressing progression gaps affecting students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. It also supports PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5 by addressing the practical barriers — caring responsibilities, travel costs and mental health challenges — that can limit participation in progression and employability activities.

The strategy recognises that progression outcomes are influenced by access to professional networks, employer engagement, social capital, confidence and financial resources, as well as academic achievement. It therefore combines targeted careers support, mentoring, employer engagement and practical financial assistance to improve graduate outcomes.

Estimated Costs - £103,000

Risks to Equality of Opportunity Addressed

The strategy addresses risks relating to insufficient personal support, financial pressures and barriers to progression from higher education. It also seeks to reduce the impact of travel costs, caring responsibilities and other practical barriers that may limit participation in employability and progression activities.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention strategy?
Embed careers coaching and progression planning throughout the student journey, with targeted support for students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.	**Marketing and Communications:** • Employability events on campus including professional networking events. • Dedicated Employer Engagement activity to bridge activity between academic teams and employers in local area, delivering activity including Live briefs. • Establish Employer Panels to feed into curriculum design and ongoing development. • Establish Entrepreneurship Hub for students .	**Short term:** Increased participation in careers, employability and progression activities; improved confidence in progression planning. **Medium term:** Improved career readiness and progression planning. **Long term:** Improved progression into employment or further study for students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2; reduced progression gaps (PTP_1).	Yes Strategy 1.

	Staffing resource: • Subscription access to students for self assessment and development of skills. • Establish Business Mentor network.		
Expand employer, alumni and mentoring networks to provide access to professional contacts, role models and labour market insight.	**Marketing and Communications:** • Develop Employer and professional body partnerships. • Develop alumni network. **Student Engagement Support:** • Mentoring and Career support programmes • Careers support. • Engage placement coordinators.	**Short term:** Increased awareness of graduate opportunities. **Medium term:** Stronger professional networks, increased labour market awareness and improved readiness for graduate employment.	Yes Strategy 1.
Provide mentoring, networking opportunities and employer engagement activities that reflect the diversity of the student population.	**Marketing and Communications:** • Diversify employer partners. • Develop alumni network. • Increase networking events. **Student Engagement Support:** • Mentoring and Career support programmes. • Student Ambassadors.	**Medium term:** Increased engagement with mentoring and employer activities; improved confidence, aspiration and professional identity. **Long term:** Reduced progression gaps for students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.	Yes Strategy 3.
Strengthen graduate follow up and destination tracking to provide ongoing support and improve understanding of progression outcomes and local labour market opportunities.	**Leadership and Management:** • Graduate Outcomes data • Alumni engagement • Destination surveys • Employer intelligence • Careers staff and business intelligence dashboards.	**Medium term:** Improved understanding of graduate destinations and labour market pathways. **Long term:** Improved progression outcomes for students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2; enhanced evidence to inform continuous improvement and progress against PTP_1, PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5.	Yes Strategy 3.

Evidence Base and Rationale

This strategy is informed by UKCBC's progression data, which identifies lower progression outcomes among graduates from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2. Staff consultation, student feedback and operational insight further indicate that financial pressures, caring responsibilities, travel costs, confidence and limited professional networks can restrict progression opportunities.

The strategy aligns with Strategy 2030 and reflects evidence that targeted careers support, mentoring, employer engagement, social capital development and practical financial assistance can improve graduate outcomes for underrepresented groups.

Evaluation

UKCBC will evaluate these interventions using a Type 2 (Empirical Enquiry) approach, combining participation data, graduate outcomes, survey evidence and qualitative feedback to assess implementation and contribution to improved progression outcomes. Data will be disaggregated by Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintile and other relevant student characteristics to monitor progress in reducing progression gaps. Findings will be reviewed annually through the College's Access and Participation

governance framework and used to refine interventions, strengthen employer partnerships and improve progression support. As longitudinal evidence accumulates, graduate destination analysis will support more robust impact assessment in line with the OfS Standards of Evidence.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation
Participation in careers, employability and progression activities.	Increased engagement with careers coaching, mentoring, employer events and progression support, particularly amongst students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.	Analysis of participation and attendance data, disaggregated by student characteristic, with comparison of engagement trends over time. **Type 2.**
Student confidence in progression planning and career readiness.	Improved confidence in progression planning, awareness of graduate opportunities and preparedness for employment or further study.	Pre- and post intervention surveys, self assessment questionnaires and focus groups measuring confidence, career readiness and understanding of labour market opportunities. **Type 2.**
Engagement with mentoring, employer activities and professional networks.	Increased participation in mentoring, networking and employer engagement activities, leading to stronger professional networks and labour market awareness.	Monitoring participation rates, mentoring records, employer engagement activity and qualitative participant feedback. **Type 2.**
Uptake and impact of progression bursaries and practical support.	Reduced financial and practical barriers to progression, with increased participation in graduate opportunities.	Analysis of bursary applications, awards and utilisation, together with student feedback and comparison of progression outcomes for recipients where feasible. **Type 2.**
Graduate destinations and progression outcomes.	Improved progression into graduate employment, professional employment or further study, particularly for students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2.	Analysis of Graduate Outcomes data, destination surveys, progression records and employment outcomes, disaggregated by student characteristic. **Type 2**, progressing towards **Type 3** as longitudinal data becomes available.

Evaluation findings from all intervention strategies will be reviewed annually through UKCBC's APP governance arrangements to determine whether activities should be continued, scaled, adapted or discontinued. Where evidence demonstrates positive impact, interventions will be embedded within mainstream provision. Where impact is limited, resources will be redirected towards approaches demonstrating greater effectiveness in improving equality of opportunity. Findings will inform continuous improvement throughout the life of the Plan.

Collectively, these five intervention strategies provide a coherent and integrated response to the equality of opportunity risks identified through UKCBC's assessment of performance. Together they support delivery of the Plan's access, progression and cross lifecycle objectives (PTA_1, PTP_1, PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5) by addressing barriers across the student journey, while responding to the practical challenges experienced by UKCBC's mature, commuter and widening participation student population. Through targeted investment, robust evaluation and continuous improvement, the College will seek to reduce inequalities in opportunity and outcomes, narrow identified access, success and progression gaps, and support all students to access higher education, succeed in their studies and progress into employment, enterprise or further study.

Whole Provider Approach

UKCBC's Access and Participation Plan is designed and delivered as a whole provider strategy for improving equality of opportunity. Responsibility for achieving the objectives set out in this Plan does not rest with a single department or function. Instead, equality of opportunity is embedded across the institution's leadership, governance, academic delivery, student support, employer engagement and operational systems.

The Plan aligns directly with UKCBC's Strategy 2030, particularly its commitments to inclusive education, student centred support, community engagement, employability, operational excellence and evidence informed decision making. Through this approach, the College seeks to ensure that equality of opportunity is considered within all major decisions affecting students, rather than being addressed through isolated initiatives.

Delivery of the APP contributes directly to all four pillars of Strategy 2030 by strengthening inclusive education, supporting people and communities, enhancing the learning experience and promoting operational excellence through evidence informed improvement.

UKCBC recognises that barriers to access, success and progression are often interconnected. Financial pressures, disability related barriers, caring responsibilities, commuting challenges, wellbeing concerns and differential access to social capital can affect multiple stages of the student lifecycle. Addressing these challenges therefore requires coordinated action across academic, professional and support services.

The College will continue to have due regard to its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 in the delivery of this Plan. Equality, diversity and inclusion activity will be aligned with Access and Participation priorities to ensure that institutional policies, teaching practice, support arrangements and governance processes collectively contribute to reducing inequalities in student outcomes.

Delivery of the five intervention strategies described within this Plan will be coordinated across relevant academic and professional service functions. Annual operational delivery plans will identify responsibilities, milestones, resource allocation and evaluation activity to ensure that interventions are implemented consistently and effectively across the institution.

Leadership and Governance

UKCBC's Board of Governors will provide strategic oversight and hold accountability for the delivery of the plan. The Executive Leadership Team will sponsor implementation, review progress against targets and oversee responses to emerging risks. Regular reports on progress against APP objectives, targets, risks and evaluation findings will be provided to governing bodies and relevant committees to ensure that equality of opportunity remains integral to institutional planning, performance management and decision making.

Governance scrutiny will focus on progress against objectives, effectiveness of interventions, evaluation findings and emerging evidence relating to student outcomes and experience.

The Chief Operating Officer will hold executive responsibility for the delivery of the APP and will coordinate institutional activity across academic and professional service areas. Progress against objectives, risks and targets will be reviewed through established governance structures, with clear accountability for implementation and evaluation.

Equality of opportunity risks identified within the APP will be monitored alongside institutional risk management arrangements to ensure that emerging concerns are identified early and appropriate mitigating actions are implemented.

Progress against APP objectives, associated equality of opportunity risks and intervention strategy outcomes will be reviewed through the College's governance, academic quality and student experience committees to ensure that equality of opportunity remains embedded within mainstream institutional oversight and decision making.

The Governing Body retains ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the College's regulatory obligations relating to equality of opportunity and oversight of this Access and Participation Plan.

Admissions and Recruitment

Admissions and recruitment functions will support delivery of the Plan through inclusive recruitment practices, accessible applicant guidance, transparent admissions processes and proactive engagement with underrepresented groups.

The College will monitor recruitment channels, applicant journeys and conversion rates to identify barriers affecting participation and inform targeted improvements. Admissions processes will also support earlier disclosure of disability and support needs, helping students access assistance before enrolment.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Academic teams will play a central role in reducing inequalities in continuation, completion and attainment. Inclusive curriculum design, accessible learning resources, authentic assessment approaches and effective academic support will be used to reduce barriers to engagement and success.

Learning, teaching and assessment practices will be informed by student feedback, evaluation findings and emerging evidence relating to differential outcomes, ensuring that improvements are responsive to the needs of diverse student groups.

Academic quality processes, including programme monitoring, annual review and enhancement activity, will consider differential student outcomes and equality of opportunity evidence when identifying priorities for improvement.

Disability, Inclusion and Accessibility

Disability support services will contribute through proactive support planning, reasonable adjustments, accessibility reviews and staff development activity. The College will seek to create an environment in which students feel confident disclosing support needs and accessing assistance throughout their studies.

Accessibility considerations will be embedded across student facing services and academic provision, supporting a more inclusive student experience from enquiry through to progression.

Student Welfare, Wellbeing and Mental Health

The Student Support and Experience Team will provide coordinated personal support to address barriers affecting participation and success. This includes mental health and wellbeing provision, hardship referral, support for students with caring responsibilities and access to specialist advice where appropriate.

The College will continue to strengthen referral pathways and staff capability so that students receive timely and effective support when challenges arise.

Finance and Financial Support

Financial support arrangements will contribute to reducing the impact of economic disadvantage on student outcomes. Targeted bursaries, travel support, childcare and caring related assistance, progression funding and hardship support will be used to address practical barriers to participation.

The College will ensure that financial support information is transparent, accessible and promoted effectively so that students understand the support available to them.

Careers and Employer Engagement

Careers, employability and employer engagement activity will support progression objectives through targeted careers guidance, employer partnerships, mentoring opportunities, alumni engagement and practical transition support.

Particular attention will be given to groups identified within the Plan as experiencing lower progression outcomes, ensuring that employability support contributes directly to reducing progression inequalities.

Data, Quality Enhancement and Evaluation

Registry, data, quality and evaluation functions will provide the evidence base necessary for effective implementation and accountability.

The College will maintain robust monitoring arrangements, undertake annual evaluation activity and use findings to inform decisions about the continuation, adaptation, scaling or discontinuation of interventions. Evaluation findings will support transparency, accountability and continuous improvement throughout the life of the Plan.

Particular emphasis will be placed on improving data quality and understanding in areas where institutional evidence is currently limited, including caring responsibilities, childcare commitments, commuter travel costs, mental health indicators and financial hardship.

Evaluation findings and lessons learned will be shared across relevant academic and professional service teams to support organisational learning and the dissemination of effective practice.

Students as Partners

Students will be active partners in the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan. Their involvement will extend beyond initial consultation to include ongoing participation in representative structures, focus groups, surveys, evaluation activity and service review processes.

Student feedback will play a critical role in identifying emerging barriers, evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and shaping future improvements. UKCBC will continue to use "You Said, We Did" approaches to demonstrate how student voice has influenced decisions relating to support, wellbeing, financial assistance, commuting challenges and wider equality of opportunity priorities.

Student representatives will contribute to monitoring and review activity through relevant committee structures and consultation processes, ensuring that student perspectives inform decision making throughout the implementation of the Plan.

Operational Accountability

Responsibility for delivery of APP interventions will be assigned to named senior leads within relevant academic and professional service functions. Annual delivery plans will identify accountable leads, milestones, performance indicators and evaluation requirements for each intervention strategy. Progress will be monitored through established governance and performance review arrangements to ensure clear accountability for delivery and impact.

Monitoring and Review

Delivery of the Plan will be supported through a structured cycle of monitoring, evaluation and review.

Termly reviews will focus on operational delivery, student voice, service performance and emerging equality of opportunity risks. This will include analysis of support uptake, wellbeing themes, financial support demand and barriers relating to travel, childcare and caring responsibilities.

Quarterly reviews will examine progress against targets, participation in interventions, early outcome indicators and corrective actions where progress is not on track. Dashboards, intervention logs, survey findings and case review evidence will inform these discussions.

Annual reviews will provide a comprehensive assessment of progress against objectives and targets, incorporating evaluation findings, student feedback and governance scrutiny. Annual monitoring reports will be used to refresh delivery plans, update milestones and identify any changes required to intervention design.

Prior to any formal plan variation or future submission, UKCBC will undertake a full review of the Plan, associated data returns, student consultation evidence and supporting documentation to ensure continued alignment between institutional priorities, delivery activity and regulatory expectations.

Where monitoring identifies that progress towards objectives or targets is off track, corrective actions will be agreed, implemented and subsequently reviewed through the College's governance arrangements.

Student Consultation and Partnership

UKCBC is a new provider seeking Approved (fee cap) registration with the Office for Students. All students who have studied at UKCBC to date have done so through subcontracted arrangements with partner institutions and are formally enrolled at those partner institutions. The College plans to welcome its first directly enrolled qualifying students in September 2027. As a provider with no current qualifying students, UKCBC has developed its approach to student consultation in accordance with OfS guidance for providers in this position.

The approach adopted by UKCBC comprises three elements that together satisfy the requirements and expectations for providers without a current qualifying student body: engagement with its existing student community as the prospective qualifying student population; a formal commitment to engage with the first qualifying cohort at the earliest reasonable opportunity from September 2027; and a timebound written commitment to seek a plan variation if that engagement reveals the plan needs to change.

Purpose of Consultation

The primary purpose of consultation is to ensure that this plan reflects the realities of students' experiences and that proposed interventions are credible, accessible, and likely to make a meaningful difference. As a new provider, UKCBC recognises that its ability to draw on direct qualifying student evidence at the point of plan preparation is limited. The College has therefore adopted an approach that maximises the value of available evidence while building in a robust and timebound mechanism to test and update the plan once qualifying students are enrolled.

Consultation will help UKCBC to:

- Validate the equality of opportunity risks identified through data analysis and staff consultation.
- Understand the lived experience of barriers affecting access, participation, success and progression.
- Test whether proposed interventions address the barriers students actually experience.
- Identify emerging risks not currently captured through available data.
- Ensure the plan remains responsive to student needs throughout its four year life.

Evidence Gathered from the Existing Student Community

Although UKCBC's current students are enrolled at partner institutions and are not qualifying students under the OfS framework, they represent the community from which the College's first qualifying cohort will be drawn and they study on the same campus, in the same learning environment, and with the same staff team that will serve qualifying students from September 2027. Their experiences of barriers relating to commuting, caring responsibilities, financial difficulty, disability, and mental health and wellbeing are directly relevant to the development of this plan and constitute evidence equivalent to market research with the prospective qualifying student population.

UKCBC has drawn on two sources of prospective student evidence in developing this plan.

Staff Consultation

Internal staff consultation was conducted between January and February 2026 with academic leads, student support coordinators, the disability team, the careers and employability service, the finance team, and registry. Staff were asked to identify which student groups appear to face the greatest barriers in their professional experience, what factors in the UKCBC context are not fully captured by available data, and which proposed interventions appear most feasible.

Staff consultation identified the need to give greater prominence to caring and childcare responsibilities, commuter travel costs, mental health and wellbeing, and financial hardship as significant barriers affecting participation, success and progression. These findings directly informed the risk prioritisation, cross cutting objective framework, and IS4 intervention design.

Commitment to Engage with the First Qualifying Cohort

UKCBC makes a clear and unconditional commitment to engage with its first qualifying cohort at the earliest reasonable opportunity following enrolment in September 2027. This commitment applies regardless of the size of the initial intake. First cohort engagement is not a supplementary activity: it is the primary mechanism through which this plan will be tested against the lived experience of qualifying students and revised where necessary.

Engagement Plan for the 2027-28 Cohort

The following structured engagement programme will be implemented from September 2027.

Timing	Activity	Purpose

September 2027 Induction	Induction survey distributed to all first cohort qualifying students within the first two weeks of enrolment.	Baseline evidence on barriers, support awareness, commuter status, caring responsibilities, financial pressure, and prior experience of the factors identified in this plan. First opportunity to test whether the plan's risk priorities reflect the incoming cohort's circumstances.
October to November 2027 First semester	Student representative structure established. Focus group sessions with students from groups identified in this plan.	Qualitative evidence on the accessibility and credibility of the proposed intervention activities. Identification of barriers not yet captured in the plan.
January 2028 Mid year review	Mid year survey and representative forum. APP monitoring report presented to student representatives.	Progress check against the monitoring indicators in the PMO objectives. First formal opportunity to identify whether the plan requires variation.
April 2028 Second semester	Review of intervention participation data. Student voice activity on the effectiveness of IS4 support activities (travel, childcare, mental health).	Evidence base for the annual APP evaluation. Identifies whether first year activities are reaching the intended groups and whether barriers to participation remain.
June to July 2028 End of first year	Annual consultation report produced. "You Said, We Did" response published. Variation decision made by the Executive Leadership Team.	Formal review of whether first cohort consultation findings require a plan variation to be submitted to the OfS before 31 July 2028.

Written Commitment to Seek a Plan Variation

The following commitment is made formally within this plan and is binding on the institution throughout the 2027-28 academic year.

Formal Written Commitment

If engagement with the first qualifying cohort during 2027-28 reveals that this Access and Participation Plan requires material change, whether to its risk priorities, objectives, targets, intervention design, financial support arrangements, or monitoring framework, UKCBC will submit a request for a plan variation to the Office for Students.

This variation request will be submitted no later than 31 July 2028.

The decision to request a variation will be made by the Chief Academic Officer (Accountable Officer under the 2026-27 organisational structure) following review of first cohort consultation findings by the Access and Participation Working Group, with approval by the Executive Leadership Team and oversight by the Board of Governors.

Where first cohort findings confirm that the plan is appropriate without material change, UKCBC will publish a formal response confirming this conclusion, together with the evidence on which it is based, by 31 July 2028.

Material change is defined for the purposes of this commitment as any finding that would require amendment to a FIT target, the addition or removal of an objective, a significant reallocation of investment between intervention strategies, or a change to the plan's risk prioritisation framework. Minor refinements to activity delivery or monitoring arrangements do not constitute material change and will be managed through the annual review process.

Ongoing Student Partnership

Student involvement will not end following the initial engagement programme with the first qualifying cohort. From 2027-28 onwards, students will play an active and continuing role in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of this plan through the following mechanisms:

- A Student Council established in the first semester of 2027-28, with a standing Access and Participation Plan agenda item at each termly meeting.
- Annual repetition of the student survey, with questions revised where monitoring evidence identifies new themes or emerging risks not previously captured.
- Student representation on the annual APP evaluation panel, with at least one student representative drawn from the groups identified in the plan.
- A published "You Said, We Did" response produced each year, summarising how student feedback has influenced delivery decisions in the preceding twelve months.
- Student contribution to the pre submission review prior to any plan variation, ensuring that changes to the plan are tested with students before they are submitted to the OfS.
- Inclusion in the governance reporting cycle: the Board of Governors will receive a student consultation summary as part of its annual APP oversight agenda item.

Consultation findings will be triangulated with institutional performance data, intervention evaluation evidence, and EORR analysis to inform decisions about the continuation, adaptation, scaling, or discontinuation of activities throughout the life of the plan.

Key Questions for First Cohort Consultation

The structured engagement programme with the 2027-28 qualifying cohort will explicitly seek student views on the following questions. These questions have been designed to test the core assumptions on which this plan is based.

- Whether the plan has identified the most significant equality of opportunity risks affecting UKCBC students in their direct experience.
- Whether caring responsibilities, childcare commitments, commuter travel costs, mental health and wellbeing challenges, and financial hardship reflect the cross cutting barriers students actually face.
- Whether the proposed intervention activities in IS1 to IS5 address the barriers students experience in practice, and whether there are barriers the plan does not currently address.
- Whether the proposed financial support — travel bursary, childcare and caring support, Access and Success Bursary, progression bursary — is understandable, accessible, and likely to make a material difference.
- What information students needed before enrolling that was not available to them, so that IS1 pre entry guidance can be refined.
- What additional student characteristics, experiences, or barriers should be monitored during the life of the plan.

Responses to these questions will be used to confirm, challenge, or refine the assumptions in this plan and will be the primary evidence base for the variation decision in July 2028.

Expected Impact of the Consultation Approach

Through this approach, UKCBC expects student consultation to play a foundational role in the credibility and effectiveness of this plan. The prospective student evidence gathered from the existing student community will ensure that the plan is grounded in the realities of the UKCBC context rather than derived solely from national data and sector benchmarks. The structured first cohort engagement programme will provide the first direct qualifying student evidence and will determine whether the plan requires variation before the end of its first year.

By embedding student partnership from the earliest point in the plan's implementation, at induction in September 2027, and by making a formal, timebound, and governance approved commitment to act on what students tell the College, UKCBC intends to demonstrate that student voice is a continuous and consequential feature of its approach to equality of opportunity, not a one time submission requirement.

Through this whole provider approach, UKCBC aims to ensure that equality of opportunity is embedded within institutional culture, decision making and practice, enabling sustained progress against the access, success and progression objectives set out within this Plan and supporting long term reductions in identified equality of opportunity gaps.

Evaluation of the Plan

UKCBC is committed to developing a culture of evidence informed decision making, continuous improvement and accountability throughout the life of this Access and Participation Plan. Evaluation will be used not only to assess whether interventions have been delivered successfully, but also to understand whether they are contributing to improved equality of opportunity outcomes for students.

The College recognises that, as a smaller provider, some student groups and outcome measures are subject to volatility and that there remain areas where institutional evidence and data maturity require further development. Consequently, UKCBC will adopt a mixed method evaluation approach that combines quantitative analysis with qualitative insight from students, staff, employers, community partners and other stakeholders.

Evaluation will be embedded into the design of interventions from the outset. Activities will be developed with clear theories of change, intended outcomes and evaluation plans, ensuring that evidence is generated systematically throughout implementation rather than retrospectively.

Particular attention will be given to the cross cutting priority groups identified through staff consultation and validated through student consultation: students with caring responsibilities, students with childcare responsibilities, commuter students facing travel cost pressures, students affected by mental health and wellbeing challenges, and students experiencing financial hardship. These groups are particularly important within UKCBC's mature and commuter student population and require improved institutional understanding over the life of the Plan.

Evaluation Framework

All major interventions will be supported by a documented theory of change or logic model that identifies the equality of opportunity risk being addressed, the intended mechanism of change, expected outcomes, assumptions and evaluation measures. These models will be reviewed periodically to ensure that interventions remain aligned with emerging evidence and institutional priorities.

The College's evaluation framework is structured across five complementary levels.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation will assess whether activities are delivered as intended, reach the appropriate students and are implemented at sufficient scale and quality.

Evidence will include delivery records, participation data, case review audits, staff and partner feedback, student voice activity and monitoring of participation among priority groups. Findings will be reviewed regularly and used to inform immediate service improvements.

Short Term Outcome Evaluation

Short term evaluation will examine whether interventions improve awareness, confidence, disability disclosure, sense of belonging, support service engagement and other early indicators of positive change.

Methods will include pre- and post intervention surveys, focus groups, applicant and student feedback, service utilisation data and targeted survey questions relating to travel costs, caring responsibilities, mental health and financial pressures.

Intermediate Outcome Evaluation

Intermediate evaluation will assess whether participation in activities contributes to improved attendance, assessment submission, continuation, attainment, careers engagement, progression planning and reductions in practical barriers to participation.

The College will use dashboard reporting, progression and attainment data, support service engagement data, survey trend analysis and qualitative evidence to understand how outcomes are changing over time. Where

feasible, matched participation analysis will be used to strengthen understanding of intervention effectiveness.

Impact Evaluation

For, selected higher cost strategically significant or innovative activities, UKCBC will seek to develop stronger evidence regarding long term impact. UKCBC will seek progressively to strengthen interventions from Type 1 through to Type 2 and, where feasible and proportionate, Type 3 evidence standards.

Where evaluation findings demonstrate consistent positive outcomes, UKCBC will seek to strengthen the evidence base through progressively more robust evaluation approaches over time, moving from process and outcome evaluation towards stronger causal understanding where feasible and proportionate.

Recognising the limitations associated with small cohorts, impact evaluation will focus on building a cumulative picture of effectiveness over time rather than relying solely on single year results.

Evaluation Capability

The College is committed to strengthening its ability to generate and use high quality evidence. During 2026–27, UKCBC will complete an evaluation self assessment using the OfS evaluation framework. Findings will inform an institutional evaluation improvement plan, including capability development, training priorities and improvements to data quality.

Areas of focus will include evaluation design, data quality, staff confidence, evidence use and institutional learning. Progress will be reviewed at least biennially throughout the life of the Plan.

Evaluation capability development will include opportunities for staff training, peer review and the sharing of effective practice across academic and professional service teams to strengthen institutional confidence in evaluation design and evidence use.

Data Development and Continuous Improvement

To support effective evaluation, UKCBC will strengthen its Access and Participation data infrastructure through the development of a comprehensive APP data dictionary and enhanced monitoring dashboards.

This work will improve the consistent collection, storage and analysis of information relating to intervention participation, student outcomes and priority group characteristics. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving understanding of:

- Caring responsibilities.
- Childcare responsibilities.
- Commuter travel cost pressures.
- Mental health and wellbeing indicators.
- Financial hardship and Cost of Study pressures.
- Participation in support interventions.

Where lawful, proportionate and appropriate, these data will be used to strengthen institutional understanding of equality of opportunity risks and to improve targeting and evaluation.

Evaluation findings will be reported through the governance arrangements described within this Plan and will inform decisions regarding resource allocation, intervention continuation, modification, scaling or discontinuation.

Transparency and Publication

UKCBC will publish an annual Access and Participation evaluation summary outlining:

Progress against targets and objectives.

- Activities delivered.
- Evaluation findings.
- Areas of success.
- Areas requiring improvement.
- Actions taken in response to evidence.

The College is committed to transparency regarding both successful and less successful interventions. Evaluation findings will be used to refine, expand, redesign or discontinue activities where appropriate.

Where beneficial, UKCBC will collaborate with external partners and peer institutions to strengthen evaluation design, increase opportunities for peer challenge and improve the robustness of evidence generated.

Through this approach, the College aims not only to improve outcomes for students but also to strengthen its institutional capability to evaluate and improve equality of opportunity over the long term.

Annual evaluation summaries will be published on the College website and shared with students through appropriate communication channels.

Investment and Resource Allocation

Priority will be given to interventions that demonstrate evidence of effectiveness through evaluation, address identified equality of opportunity risks and contribute directly to the achievement of APP objectives and targets.

Resource allocation will be reviewed annually through evaluation, student consultation and performance monitoring to ensure that expenditure remains targeted, proportionate and evidence informed.

Annual investment decisions will be informed by progress against APP targets, evaluation findings, student consultation outcomes and emerging equality of opportunity risks. Resources may be reallocated during the life of the Plan where evidence indicates that alternative approaches are likely to generate greater impact.

Provision of Information to Students

UKCBC is committed to providing prospective and current students with clear, accessible, accurate and timely information about tuition fees, financial support and the costs associated with study. Information will be presented in ways that support informed decision making and comply with consumer protection requirements and Office for Students expectations.

UKCBC recognises that access to clear financial information forms an important part of equality of opportunity. Students who are unfamiliar with higher education finance, managing study costs or accessing financial support may be less able to make informed decisions unless information is clear, timely and accessible.

The College will not rely solely on website publication. Fee and financial support information will be communicated at key points throughout the student journey, including enquiry, application, offer, enrolment and ongoing study.

Before students commit to study, UKCBC will provide clear information on:

- The annual tuition fee applicable to the first year of study.
- Any arrangements for fee changes in subsequent years.
- The total aggregate fee payable over the expected duration of the course.
- Available bursaries, scholarships, hardship support and targeted financial assistance.
- Eligibility criteria and application arrangements.
- Payment schedules and review processes.

Financial support arrangements will be designed to complement, rather than replace, mainstream student finance and will focus on reducing barriers that may affect access, continuation, attainment and progression.

Information will be available in accessible formats and will be consistent across all recruitment channels, including direct recruitment activity and any third party recruitment arrangements.

Tuition Fees

At the point of final submission, tuition fee information will be aligned with approved institutional fee setting arrangements and the final FIT workbook.

Before publication of the final Plan, UKCBC will confirm:

- Annual tuition fees for qualifying students entering in 2027–28.
- The approach to fee increases in subsequent years, where applicable.
- Aggregate fee information for completion of each course.

These figures will be incorporated consistently across all applicant facing information, contractual documentation and institutional publications.

Financial Support

UKCBC intends to provide a range of targeted and universal financial support measures designed to reduce barriers to participation, success and progression.

Subject to final approval and consultation, support will include:

- An Access and Success Bursary for students from lower income households and areas of higher deprivation.
- An Enhanced Support Bursary for care experienced, estranged and other students facing significant structural disadvantage.
- Disability transition and study support funding to address urgent accessibility related needs.
- Progression participation bursaries supporting graduate employment and further study activity.
- Travel and commuter support for students experiencing significant transport related costs.
- Childcare and caring responsibility support where these create barriers to participation.

Access to the College's universal hardship fund for students experiencing unexpected financial difficulty.

Final values, eligibility criteria, application arrangements and interaction with wider hardship support will be confirmed before submission and protected for continuing students in accordance with OfS requirements.

Accessibility and Student Understanding

The College recognises that support is only effective when students understand what is available and feel confident accessing it. Student consultation and annual review processes will therefore be used to test the clarity, accessibility and relevance of all student facing financial support information.

Particular attention will be given to ensuring that students affected by financial hardship, caring responsibilities, childcare commitments, mental health challenges and commuting pressures can easily identify available support and understand how to access it.

Through clear communication, transparent processes and accessible information, UKCBC aims to ensure that students are able to make informed decisions about study and access the support necessary to succeed throughout their educational journey.

Student facing fee and financial support information will be reviewed annually to ensure continued accuracy, accessibility and alignment with student needs and regulatory requirements.

Implementation Summary

Through this Access and Participation Plan, UKCBC commits to addressing the barriers that limit equality of opportunity across access, success and progression. By combining targeted intervention, student partnership, robust evaluation and whole provider accountability, the College will work to reduce identified gaps, improve outcomes for underrepresented students and ensure that all learners have the opportunity to achieve their academic, professional and personal ambitions.

Annex A: Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity

This annex summarises the approach taken to the assessment of performance and sets out the additional contextual information that informed risk prioritisation in this plan. It also records the additional staff consultation priority groups to be validated by the student survey and built into data development.

In preparing this assessment of performance, UKCBC has had regard to the OfS access and participation data dashboard in accordance with Regulatory Notice 1 paragraph 51. As a provider whose qualifying students will enrol for the first time in September 2027, and whose current students are enrolled through subcontracted arrangements at partner institutions, UKCBC does not appear in the dashboard in a form that produces reportable data for its own provision. Dashboard data for UKPRN 10022021 is suppressed or not available at the level of disaggregation required for meaningful analysis of the student groups identified in this plan. In accordance with OfS guidance for new providers with limited data, the assessment of performance has therefore been conducted using internal data drawn from the College's records of its current student community, EORR risk analysis, staff consultation evidence, and national comparators where available. This approach reflects the OfS expectation that providers in this position demonstrate a credible, evidence informed approach to promoting equality of opportunity rather than a mature quantitative dataset.

Additional indications monitored but not translated into separate numerical objectives in this plan, are summarised below.

Area monitored	Current picture	Reason not prioritised as a separate objective in this APP
Mature access and young student measures	Mature access remains very strong; the young cohort is extremely small in the current internal AoP.	Mature participation aligns with UKCBC's mission, while young student analysis is constrained by very small numbers.
Access by Asian, Black and Other ethnicity groups	All three groups remain below the White comparator in the current access share presentation, with the largest gap for Asian entrants.	Because the current access measure is a share of the annual cycle rather than a within group cohort rate, UKCBC is treating these as monitored risks alongside wider consultation and channel analysis rather than as separate FIT targets in this plan.
Female progression	The current UWL progression source shows female progression above the male comparator.	This is monitored as a strength to sustain rather than a separate progression objective in this plan.
IMD access and on course success	Access from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 backgrounds is strong and attainment is currently slightly in favour of IMD Quintiles 1 and 2, though progression remains adverse.	IMD remains a progression priority and a financial support priority, but not a separate access or success objective in this plan.
Groups not yet robustly captured in data	FSM, care experience, estrangement, caring responsibility, childcare responsibility, commuter status/travel cost pressure, mental health condition, financial difficulty and most intersections are not yet robustly reportable.	These cannot responsibly be translated into separate numerical FIT targets yet; instead UKCBC is making timebound data and insight commitments and has created a monitored priority objective for intervention and evaluation.

Data / insight gap	Current position	Action	Indicative deadline
Care experience, estrangement, caring responsibility and childcare responsibility	Not yet routinely available in a robust APP reporting format; childcare responsibilities require a clearer field or survey linked insight.	Review application, enrolment and student record fields and introduce consistent collection and reporting where lawful and proportionate, distinguishing childcare and wider caring responsibilities where possible.	Design by Dec 2026; first routine reporting from 2027-28 review where data quality permits.

Data / insight gap	Current position	Action	Indicative deadline
Mental health condition, wellbeing barriers and disaggregated disability categories	Headline disability available, but not sufficient category depth for reliable APP use; wellbeing barriers currently captured mainly through support services and survey evidence.	Improve disclosure routes and evaluate whether mental health-condition, wellbeing barrier and disability category reporting can be used safely and meaningfully alongside support uptake and survey evidence.	Review in 2026-27; first expanded internal reporting by 2027-28/2028-29 subject to data quality.
Intersectional analysis	Current data is insufficient for most robust intersectional analysis.	Build a small provider approach using combined indicators, qualitative evidence and, where possible, intersections linked to ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic background.	Method agreed in 2026-27; first formal intersectional review by 2028-29.
Recruitment channel and progression insight	Some channel analysis exists operationally; progression currently relies on the UWL source.	Strengthen direct channel reporting, compare direct and third party outcomes, and develop fuller direct progression evidence over time.	Enhanced channel dashboard by 2027-28; fuller progression review by 2028-29.
Student insight on missing risks	Existing voice mechanisms are useful but not sufficient for all hard to reach groups.	Use consultation and annual review to collect targeted qualitative evidence on flexible provision, mental health, finances, belonging and underrepresented groups not yet visible in the quantitative data.	From 2026 consultation onward; reported annually.

Supplementary data development commitments for staff consultation priority groups

Priority group / barrier	Current position	Immediate 2026 consultation evidence	Routine data and evaluation action	Indicative review point
Learners with childcare responsibilities	Not routinely available as a robust APP field.	Student survey asks directly about regular childcare responsibilities and impact on attendance/participation.	Add lawful collection options, monitor support uptake and triangulate with attendance/submission/case review data.	Survey baseline before submission; routine reporting from 2027-28 review where data quality permits.
Learners with wider caring responsibilities	Not routinely available as a robust APP field.	Student survey asks about regular caring responsibilities at home and impact on participation.	Develop consistent recording, named adviser referral tags and annual qualitative review.	Survey baseline before submission; routine reporting from 2027-28 review where data quality permits.
Commuter students facing travel costs	Commuter status and weekly travel cost pressure are not currently robust APP measures.	Student survey asks usual weekly travel spend and impact of travel costs on attendance/participation.	Create travel cost pressure indicator from survey/support data and review against attendance, support and progression participation.	Baseline before submission; dashboard prototype in 2027-28.
Mental health and wellbeing issues	Mental health condition reporting is limited; wellbeing barriers visible through services and survey evidence.	Student survey asks whether mental health/wellbeing concerns made study harder and affected attendance/participation.	Improve safe disclosure, service uptake analysis and referral data, with qualitative triangulation.	Baseline before submission; expanded internal reporting by 2027-28/2028-29.
Financial difficulty and Cost of Study pressure	IMD progression target exists, but hardship/living cost pressure is broader than IMD.	Student survey tests hardship/general living costs, childcare costs, travel costs and support clarity.	Use financial support uptake, hardship referrals and survey trends to evaluate targeted bursaries and identify future target options.	Baseline before submission; annual financial support review from 2027-28.

Annex B: Theory of change, rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy

This annex sets out the theory of change that supports UKCBC's five intervention strategies. It makes explicit how activities are expected to reduce the identified equality of opportunity risks and priorities addressed through Objectives PTA_1, PTP_1, PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5. The logic is deliberately proportionate to UKCBC's size and data maturity: numerical targets are retained where baselines are robust enough, while monitored outcomes are used where data development work must first establish a reliable baseline.

The overarching theory of change is that students are more likely to access, continue, complete, attain and progress when they receive clear information early, can disclose barriers safely, encounter inclusive teaching and assessment, receive timely academic/pastoral/financial support, and have practical routes into employment or further study. The interventions therefore combine information, flexibility, support coordination, targeted financial assistance and progression support rather than relying on any single activity.

Cross cutting theory of change for Objectives PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5

Priority group / barrier	Barrier mechanism	Intervention response	Expected short term change	Evidence to test the logic
Learners with childcare responsibilities	Childcare costs, timetable clashes and emergencies reduce attendance, study time and assessment preparation.	Pre entry guidance, named advice route, timetable/catch up review, targeted childcare/caring support and hardship referral.	Earlier disclosure, better support awareness, fewer silent withdrawals and stronger engagement after caring related disruption.	Survey baseline; support uptake; attendance/submission trend; case review audit; student feedback.
Learners with wider caring responsibilities	Unpredictable care demands reduce flexibility and increase stress, affecting attendance, belonging and help seeking.	Named adviser, personal tutor escalation, flexible academic support, wellbeing referral and financial support where care costs create participation barriers.	Students seek help earlier and receive a coherent academic/pastoral response rather than disengaging.	Survey/focus groups; personal tutor referrals; support plan/action plan timeliness; qualitative "you said, we did" evidence.
Commuter students facing travel costs	High travel costs and transport disruption reduce attendance, campus engagement and access to progression activities.	Transparent cost information, timetable review, targeted travel support, catch up resources and progression travel bursaries.	Improved ability to attend, participate and engage with careers/employer opportunities.	Weekly travel spend survey item; travel support uptake; attendance; progression activity participation; recipient feedback.
Students affected by mental health or wellbeing issues	Poor wellbeing reduces confidence, concentration, attendance and timely submission, and can make support routes feel difficult to navigate.	Visible mental health / wellbeing route, staff capability, early risk identification, referral partnerships and integrated academic/pastoral support.	Earlier help seeking, clearer referral routes, reduced crisis escalation and stronger belonging.	Service uptake; referral timeliness; pre/post confidence feedback; focus groups; continuation and engagement indicators.
Students experiencing financial difficulty	Living costs, travel, childcare and digital/progression costs create immediate participation barriers and increase risk of non continuation.	Targeted bursaries, hardship referral, financial support communications, travel/childcare support and progression participation bursaries.	Reduced immediate cost friction, improved support take up and improved ability to remain engaged.	Financial support uptake; hardship outcomes; survey trend; attendance/submission; progression activity data; annual financial support review.

Intervention strategy 1: Inclusive Pathways, Information and Access

Theory of change	Design logic	Evidence / evaluation
Need/risk addressed	Disability disclosure among entrants remains low, and staff consultation indicates that some applicants are deterred by uncertainty about timetable demands, travel costs, childcare/caring responsibilities, mental health support and financial support.	PTA_1, PTS_3, PTS_4, PTS_5; EORR risks on information and guidance, perception of higher education, application success rates, limited delivery choice and cost pressures.
Priority students	Disabled applicants, mature learners, commuter students, students with care or childcare responsibilities, students from IMD Quintiles 1 and 2/low income backgrounds and applicants seeking clear support information.	Reach, enquiry, application, offer and enrolment data disaggregated where possible; student survey evidence.
Inputs and activities	Evening/weekend/online applicant guidance; accessible admissions and early disclosure; transparent cost/travel/childcare and support information; flexible pathways review; community, FE and employer partnerships.	Activity logs; CRM funnel data; website/content review; partner records.
Mechanism of change	Clear, trusted and practical information reduces uncertainty and perceived risk; named contacts increase confidence to disclose; flexible delivery options make entry more viable for those with work, care, travel or wellbeing constraints.	Applicant confidence surveys; disclosure timing; enquiry to application and offer to start conversion.
Short term outcomes	Applicants understand costs, support and expectations earlier; disclosure improves; target groups feel that UKCBC is accessible and credible.	Applicant surveys; event feedback; early disclosure/referral data.
Intermediate and longer term outcomes	Improved disability declaration, improved fit between student circumstances and study pattern, and stronger pre entry awareness and uptake of support for students with caring, commuting and wellbeing related barriers.	FIT target milestone for PTA_1; monitored PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5 indicators; continuation/engagement triangulation.
Assumptions and risks	Assumes information is delivered early enough and through channels used by target groups. Risks include inconsistent third party information, low survey response or budget constraints; mitigations are annual content review, channel monitoring and student feedback loops.	Annual governance review and corrective action log.

Intervention strategy 2: Disability Confidence and Supported Transition

Theory of change	Design logic	Evidence / evaluation
Need/risk addressed	Disability related gaps are the clearest on course and progression risk, and mental health/wellbeing issues can be hidden where students are reluctant to disclose or do not understand support routes.	PTA_1, PTS_5; EORR risks on insufficient academic support, insufficient personal support, mental health and cost pressures.
Priority students	Disabled applicants/students, students with mental health or wellbeing issues, students needing reasonable adjustments, and students whose disability/health barriers intersect with financial, commuting, work, care or childcare pressures.	Disclosure data, support plan data, service uptake, student survey and qualitative feedback.
Inputs and activities	Named disability/health support contact, clear DSA and reasonable adjustment guidance, early support needs conversations, rapid adjustments, inclusive curriculum/assessment training, blended learning review and disability inclusive progression support.	Support service logs, staff development records, accessibility checks, careers engagement data.
Mechanism of change	Earlier disclosure and faster support planning reduce avoidable barriers before the first major assessment. Inclusive teaching and assessment reduce the need for repeated individual crisis intervention. Progression support builds confidence to request workplace adjustments.	Time from disclosure to support plan; student confidence; module level barrier reports.
Short term outcomes	Students know how to access support, receive adjustments earlier, experience fewer avoidable learning barriers and report stronger confidence in help seeking.	Applicant/student surveys, referral timing, support plan implementation and focus groups.
Intermediate and longer term outcomes	Improved disabled student access, disclosure and engagement with support, and stronger outcomes for students whose disability intersects with mental health and wellbeing challenges.	PTA_1 and PTS_5 milestones; continuation/completion monitoring; graduate follow up.
Assumptions and risks	Assumes students trust disclosure routes and staff apply inclusive practice consistently. Risks include capacity pressure and late	Termly service review, quality committee reporting and annual evaluation summary.

	disclosure; mitigations include named contact, triage, staff development and termly case review.	

Intervention strategy 3: Inclusive Success, Belonging and Student Achievement

Theory of change	Design logic	Evidence / evaluation
Need/risk addressed	Male students and Black students experience lower continuation, completion and attainment outcomes than comparator groups. While the specific causes of these differentials are not yet fully understood, institutional evidence, student consultation and sector research suggest that academic engagement, sense of belonging, support utilisation, confidence, representation and access to social capital can influence student success. Without targeted intervention, these differential outcomes may persist.	PTS_1 and PTS_2; OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register risks relating to insufficient academic support, insufficient personal support, low belonging, engagement and differential attainment.
Priority students	Male students, Black students and students demonstrating lower engagement, attendance, assessment participation or academic confidence. Particular attention will be given to students experiencing multiple or intersecting barriers that may increase the risk of lower success outcomes.	Assessment of Performance outcomes; continuation, completion and attainment data; attendance and submission monitoring; student surveys; focus groups; student representative feedback.
Inputs and activities	Targeted induction and transition support; academic coaching; peer mentoring; role model and ambassador activity; belonging and engagement initiatives; inclusive teaching and assessment practice; academic skills support; student voice and co creation activities; progression and aspiration building opportunities.	Attendance and engagement dashboards; mentoring participation; workshop attendance; student voice records; academic support uptake; module and programme performance data.
Mechanism of change	Students who feel connected to their learning community and engage with academic support are more likely to attend, participate and succeed. Targeted mentoring, belonging activity and academic coaching improve confidence, engagement and support utilisation, while inclusive teaching practices reduce barriers to participation and achievement. Increased engagement and belonging are expected to contribute to improved continuation, completion and attainment outcomes.	Support utilisation; mentoring participation; belonging survey results; engagement metrics; pre- and post intervention confidence measures; student feedback.
Short term outcomes	Improved awareness and uptake of academic and pastoral support; increased participation in mentoring and engagement activities; improved student confidence, belonging and academic self efficacy.	Support uptake data; participation rates; belonging surveys; student feedback; confidence measures.
Intermediate and longer term outcomes	Improved attendance, engagement and assessment participation; improved continuation and completion rates; reduced attainment differentials affecting male students and Black students; stronger overall student success outcomes.	PTS_1 and PTS_2 monitoring; continuation and completion measures; attainment outcomes; annual APP evaluation and evidence review.
Assumptions and risks	Assumes that engagement, belonging and support utilisation influence student success outcomes and that students will participate in available support. Risks include low participation, stigma, limited engagement and small cohort volatility. Mitigations include targeted communications, student co creation, proactive referral processes, flexible delivery models and ongoing evaluation.	Annual APP review; intervention evaluation reports; student representative feedback; governance oversight through the Access and Participation Working Group and Academic Board.

Intervention strategy 4: Mental Health, Caring Responsibilities and Cost of Study Support

Theory of change	Design logic	Evidence / evaluation
Need/risk addressed	UKCBC's assessment of performance, student consultation and operational insight indicate that caring responsibilities, childcare commitments, commuting and travel costs, financial hardship, and mental health and wellbeing challenges can affect students' ability to participate fully in learning and student life. These barriers often occur in combination and may contribute to lower attendance, reduced engagement, assessment non submission, increased withdrawal risk and weaker progression outcomes. While current evidence does not support separate numerical targets for these groups, the College considers these factors to	PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5; student consultation; support service data; attendance and engagement monitoring; OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register risks relating to insufficient personal support, mental health and wellbeing, financial pressures, and capacity to participate.

	represent significant equality of opportunity risks requiring targeted intervention and continued evidence development.	
Priority students	Students with caring responsibilities, students with childcare commitments, commuter students, students experiencing financial hardship or cost of living pressures, students experiencing mental health or wellbeing challenges, and students facing multiple or intersecting barriers that may affect participation, continuation, attainment or progression.	Assessment of Performance findings; student surveys; support uptake data; attendance and submission monitoring; focus groups; student representative feedback.
Inputs and activities	Enhanced student support and early intervention processes; attendance and engagement monitoring; personal tutor referral and escalation routes; wellbeing and mental health support pathways; caring and childcare guidance; commuter support; hardship and bursary schemes; Cost of Study assistance; targeted communications; staff awareness and referral training; and improved data collection relating to caring responsibilities, commuting, wellbeing and financial hardship.	Support service records; attendance dashboards; referral data; bursary and hardship fund utilisation; workshop participation; student engagement and service uptake data.
Mechanism of change	Students are more likely to engage, persist and succeed when practical barriers are identified early and appropriate support is available before challenges escalate. Improved identification, referral and support mechanisms increase awareness and uptake of assistance, reduce the impact of financial, practical and wellbeing related pressures, and strengthen students' ability to participate fully in learning. Improved institutional understanding of these barriers also supports better targeting, evaluation and future intervention design.	Referral timeliness; support uptake; engagement following intervention; student feedback; confidence and wellbeing measures; case review analysis.
Short term outcomes	Earlier identification of students experiencing practical barriers; increased awareness and uptake of available support; improved student confidence in managing study alongside caring, commuting, financial and wellbeing related pressures; increased engagement with support services.	Support utilisation data; student surveys; case file audits; attendance and submission indicators; focus groups and qualitative feedback.
Intermediate and longer term outcomes	Improved attendance, engagement and continuation among students experiencing practical barriers; reduced risk of silent withdrawal and non continuation; improved student experience and participation; stronger institutional evidence regarding the impact of caring responsibilities, commuting, financial hardship and wellbeing on student outcomes; and improved capacity to target future APP interventions and objectives.	PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5 monitoring; continuation and completion indicators; annual APP evaluation; student consultation findings; evidence development milestones; annual governing body review.
Assumptions and risks	The intervention assumes that practical barriers can be identified sufficiently early and that students are willing and able to engage with available support. Risks include under disclosure, stigma, low awareness of services, resource constraints, and limitations in data quality. Mitigations include proactive communications, multiple referral routes, student co creation, transparent eligibility criteria, staff training, targeted outreach and ongoing evaluation to refine support approaches.	Annual APP review; evaluation reports; financial support monitoring; student representative feedback; Access and Participation Working Group oversight; public evaluation and impact reporting.

Intervention strategy 5: Progression, Employability and Graduate Opportunity

Theory of change	Design logic	Evidence / evaluation
Need/risk addressed	Graduates from areas of higher deprivation are less likely to progress into positive graduate outcomes. Staff consultation indicates that travel costs, childcare/caring commitments, mental health challenges and limited professional networks can restrict access to employer and further study opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged students.	PTP_1, PTS_3, PTS_4, PTS_5; EORR risks on insufficient personal support, cost pressures and progression from higher education.
Priority students	IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 students/graduates and students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds who face travel, childcare/caring, wellbeing or financial barriers to participation in careers and progression activities.	Careers participation, bursary uptake, graduate follow up and progression outcomes.
Inputs and activities	Targeted careers coaching from earlier in the journey, employer/alumni/mentor network, disability inclusive disclosure and adjustment preparation, progression bursaries for	Careers staffing, employer engagement, mentor coordination, bursary records and alumni systems.

	travel/digital/professional/childcare caring costs, and structured graduate follow up.	
Mechanism of change	Earlier coaching builds career clarity and application readiness; role models and employer links increase social capital; practical support removes immediate cost barriers; follow up reconnects graduates who need additional help.	Pre/post confidence, participation records, mentor feedback and graduate contact rates.
Short term outcomes	Target groups engage earlier with careers, attend employer/mentor activity, understand reasonable adjustments and can participate in interviews or further study steps despite practical barriers.	Workshop data, bursary feedback, careers action plans and employer engagement logs.
Intermediate and longer term outcomes	Improved progression for IMD Quintiles 1 and 2 and socioeconomically disadvantaged graduates, and stronger evidence on local opportunity pathways and practical barrier reduction.	PTP_1, PTS_3, PTS_4 and PTS_5 milestones; graduate outcome monitoring; qualitative graduate follow up.
Assumptions and risks	Assumes sufficient employer engagement and graduate contact. Risks include low alumni response, local labour market constraints and small number volatility; mitigations include local employer partnerships, multiple follow up channels and multi year trend review.	Annual progression evaluation and end of plan synthesis.