



Access And Participation Statement 2023-24

Leeds College of Building

Executive Summary

Leeds College of Building (LCB) and the University Centre (UC) are committed to working with internal and external stakeholders to increase access and participation in HE courses. Over the past 8 years HE courses have increased significantly with offers now up to level 6 degree. The University Centre has a good diverse staff workforce with female, BAME & European staff representing 46% of the total staff. This is enriching our delivery and providing role models for underrepresented groups. The UC offer is predominately apprenticeships with no full time offer at HE in 23-24. Full time HE provision is an area for future growth linking further with schools, colleges, and the local communities to promote the careers and benefits of HE at Leeds College of Building as an alternative to traditional Universities. Excellent employer engagement in the UC has built a reputation with industry of delivering quality apprenticeships attracting students nationally with unique and bespoke modes of delivery including block release to meet employer needs. LCB actively participate in employer engagement, including our Employer Advisory Boards where access and participation is discussed along with curriculum. Our Access and Participation Statement reflects LCB's unwavering commitment to equality and inclusion. We are dedicated to creating an educational environment where every student can thrive, contribute, and succeed. Through ongoing collaboration and innovation, we strive to make a meaningful impact on widening access to higher education and building a brighter future for all.

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Updated March 2024 v3

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1. Introduction, Background and Context

Leeds College of Building (LCB) is a General Further Education College (GFEC) specialising in Construction and the Built Environment. The College was formed in 1960 as a Craft College and over the last 16 years has steadily grown its higher education (HE) provision to provide career progression and development for, primarily, part-time students working within the industry. The College holds the following standards and accreditations: IAG Matrix Standard and Health & Safety OHSAS18001.

The University Centre for Architecture, Engineering and Construction (UC-AEC) delivers courses ranging from Level 3 to Level 6 including BTEC's, T-Levels, HNC's, HTQ's and Degree Apprenticeships in Construction Management, Civil Engineering, Building Services Engineering and Quantity Surveying. Our Degree Apprenticeships are validated with Leeds Beckett University and London South Bank University. In 22-23 the UC reached 1229 students with 80% apprenticeships.

The University Centre has substantial experience of delivering high quality and supportive higher education provision which meets local employer and community needs, as well as responding to and attracting recruitment from further afield. Significant steps have been made to ensure support is provided to attract under-represented applicants to aid student's ability to progress and increase widening participation in higher education.

One of the aims within the strategic framework is to ensure there are no significant differences (within 4%) between performance of different groups of students, e.g. All Ages / Gender / BAME / LLDD / disadvantaged (post code areas).

Statistics 2022-23

Category	Number of students		
	Whole College	University Centre	Percentage in University Centre
Total Students	5401	1229	23%
Female Students	476	206	43%
BAME Students	1004	181	18%
Students with disclosed disabilities	1456	238	16%

From the table above the University Centre represented 23% of the whole college intake for 22-23 with 43% of females in the college being in the UC faculty. Numbers of females and BAME students are steadily increasing in the UC however still underrepresented across the college. These improvements in the UC could be attributed to the diverse marketing strategies and work with external stakeholders such as schools, colleges, employers, and local government departments to raise awareness of the industry careers and opportunities. It is also likely to be due to the types of careers offered in the University Centre such as Architecture, Management and Engineering.

Over the past eight years the University Centre staff have become much more diverse with excellent role models for female and BAME students to aspire to.

Statistic for the University Centre staff:

- The UC management team has 2 males and 4 females
- Total staff = 64
- Female, BAME & European = 31
- Female, BAME & European represent 48% of the staff in the University Centre

Postcode Data for University Centre 22-23

The table below shows the postcode location of applicants with almost half outside of the Leeds and surrounding areas. This is due to the bulk of the UC offer being apprenticeships with a national reach for students and employers. This is also due to our various unique block release offers that make it feasible for employers to send their apprentices to Leeds from all over the UK.

Area	Number of students	Percentage %
Leeds	315	26%
Wakefield	100	8%
Bradford	101	8%
Calderdale	49	4%
Kirklees	81	7%
Other	583	47%
Total	1229	

The mission of Leeds College of Building is “Inspiring lives and building futures” and we have a common set of values across everything we do, which we expect all staff and students to embrace:

- Respectful – to value diversity, care for and support each other and the environment
- Aspirational – to achieve excellence in all we do
- Integrity – to be transparent, open, and honest
- Accountable – to be responsible for our actions
- Inspirational – to be creative and innovative in all we do
- Enjoyable – to have fun and succeed

These values are on display throughout the college. Extra work is ongoing to embed these in our students experience to raise awareness.

2. Transparency of fee structure and marketing

The University Centre offers outstanding value for money for full time and part time level 4 undergraduates with fees considerably lower than most other HEIs with comparable degree level study. The fee structure is transparent with all our HNC’s and HTQ’s now standardised at a fee of £5542 for 24-25. Awarding body (BTEC Pearson) fees are now included to help students applying for loans through the Student Loans Company (SLC). There are no unexpected hidden fees for students.

Clear information about HE fees at Leeds College of Building, and the financial assistance to students is widely available. This is accessible via the following methods:

- College Website
- Student Services (student welfare and financial support)
- College “Open Days” and promotional events
- Higher Education Provider Services (HEP) - The Student Loans Company partnering with universities and colleges
- External School & college career events

We are committed to reaching out to our schools, colleges and communities with staff regularly attending local schools and colleges to raise the profile and promote the benefits of HE careers routes in Construction with clear information and guidance. Marketing includes photography and images representing the diverse college community to help encourage and improve the confidence of potential applicants from all areas of society.

3. Objectives

To strengthen and extend support with widening participation and access to higher education Leeds College of Building has set out the following key objectives:

Increase and widen participation rates in HE, Higher Level and Degree Apprenticeships including:

- Students with vocational learning experiences and qualifications
- Female students and students from ethnic groups
- Students with disabilities or learning difficulties

- Students requiring full-time and part time HE provision
- Broadening the offer of HE provisions to meet employer and student demand
- Students from deprived wards (locally and nationally)
- Utilising the OfS Student Monitoring/Opportunity Funding and National Scholarship Funds to effectively engage and support disadvantaged students
- Retention strategies to support students through the whole learning experience from IAG to completion.
- Sustain and extend partnerships with schools, employers, professional bodies, local authorities, and awarding bodies thereby enabling additional opportunities, enhanced retention, completions and further progression in HE and success in the workplace.
- Develop existing outreach programmes and partnerships with schools to further explore ways of collaboratively delivering extensive career advice and guidance across the spectrum of built environment and engineering professions.
- Provide comprehensive and robust data to enable a full analysis of retention, progression, completion, and destination of underrepresented groups.
- Further extend clear communications through marketing and students services within the admissions and on-programme stages relating to the support offered to all our full and part time students including any disadvantaged or underrepresented groups.

To help students who do not have the prerequisite entry qualifications to HE the University Centre offers a comprehensive 'Bridge course to HE' to allow students to study for 1 year to cover core content and prepare for progression to HE with Leeds College of Building.

4. Access and Participation

Students have access to information, advice and guidance on application and have the opportunity to come and discuss the course offer with a tutor. A fair and effective admissions process ensures clear opportunities for students from all backgrounds, and this is acknowledged with the recent certification for Matrix accreditation reinforcing the quality of our Admissions and Student Services Department, which supports students through recruitment, admissions, finance, enrichment, information, advice, and guidance. Tutorial practice has now been consistently adopted across higher education, building upon the good practice of one-to-one tutorials and students value these opportunities to check progress and obtain valuable formative feedback.

A whole College approach can be seen through the Higher Education Strategic Forum with Student representatives forming part of this forum and are at the heart of the agenda at all meetings. Managers from LCB support teams across the College report each term to confirm how they are making an impact on the student experience and how their services within the College are clearly fulfilling the needs of students. These areas include Equality and Inclusion, Examinations, Quality Management, Marketing, Library and Learning Resources, Finance for assistance with student loans and Student Services for admissions, pastoral care, and support, with HE teaching staff also included in the attendees.

5. Employability

As well as core industry content, further employability skills are developed on our courses, including presentations, team working, time management, verbal and written communication, problem solving and hands-on practical elements through a series of assessment activities. These are all intrinsic within a variety of sessions at college applied to real working tasks linked to industry situations and scenarios. Outstanding partnership working and employer engagement has continued to flourish enabling significant progression in employment for LCB HE students with the flagship Technician Apprenticeship Consortium having two significant employer advisory boards chaired by employer representatives with student representation on both advisory boards. Further Degree apprenticeship Employers Advisory Boards are held twice per year to link the college and employers together to discuss industry developments, requirements, course content and delivery.

Professional body inclusion and collaboration from the built environment institutions is particularly strong with CIHT, ICE, RICS, CIBSE, CIOB and BIFM all enhancing the student experience through professional support, ethics, and industry links together with additional awards, scholarships and membership.

Across the sustainable built environment higher level programmes, as an example, there are at least thirteen career progression and HE pathways identified for students. These opportunities include architectural technology, health, and safety management, building services engineering, project management, digital engineering, building surveying, quantity surveying, civil engineering, site management, contracts management, site engineering, environment management, structural engineering and estimating with several of these being relevant to each selected pathway. This offers versatility and flexibility for students and opportunities to link with various potential employers and universities allowing students to explore careers avoiding being immediately pigeon-holed to one particular career route. Employment opportunities are publicised within the College, with tutors supporting students with a host of employability skills to help them present professionally to prospective companies thus, enabling them to achieve their goals. Significant investment in industry standard equipment and software, through the OFS capital funds, has enabled our deliver to be up to date & relevant to current industry practices.

6. Collaboration

Leeds College of Building (LCB) is committed to the Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY) partnership, an established consortium of twelve HE providers in West Yorkshire (comprising FE colleges with HE provision, and universities). The partner members represent a diverse range of institutions offering a vast array of different courses, subjects, qualifications and modes of study. We are also committed to the Uni Connect Programme, secured by Go Higher West Yorkshire.

Through Uni Connect, the College is expanding its offer of supporting young people to achieve their ambitions by helping remove academic, financial, and cultural barriers to Higher Education and is exploring bespoke initiatives such as:

- A bespoke programme of activities for school's Engineering, Design & Technology and Construction departments to aid progression to LCB
- Support from a Personal Advisor for students identified by the school as needing additional help
- Mentoring from a current LCB student to aid transition from school to college
- Talks from current Student Ambassadors
- Taster days and workshops
- An intensive week of taster activities
- Assemblies and school visits
- Site visits
- Debating challenges
- Competitions
- Progression and career pathway talks
- Employer talks

The new College Management structure is enabling much more opportunity and involvement to engage with external stakeholders and improve access and participation. Leeds College of Building is committed to regularly monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our access and participation initiatives. We analyse demographic data, progression rates, and student outcomes to identify areas for improvement. This data-driven approach allows us to refine our strategies and better support underrepresented groups.

Conclusion

Leeds College of Building and the University Centre are committed to widening participation and access to HE for students from all backgrounds. The growth in HE is a key strategy for the college and has grown significantly over recent years. To meet the demand staff recruitment has steadily grown with a diverse representation. Great efforts are made to promote our courses to reach underrepresented areas of the community with further initiatives ongoing. Our Access and Participation Statement reflects LCB's unwavering commitment to equality and inclusion. We are dedicated to creating an educational environment where every student can thrive, contribute, and succeed. Through ongoing collaboration and innovation, we strive to make a meaningful impact on widening access to higher education and building a brighter future for all.