



OFS Access and Participation Statement 2026-27

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1. Executive summary

Leeds College of Building University Centre (LCBU) is committed to working with internal and external stakeholders to increase access and participation in HE courses. Over the past 10 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, ethnic minorities & 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 25-26. 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.

2. 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 ISO45001:2018.

The University Centre (LCBU) delivers courses ranging from Level 2 to Level 6 including Foundation T-level, 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.

The University Centre has substantial experience of delivering high quality and supportive higher education provision which meets both national and regional employer and community needs. 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 strategic aims is to ensure there are no significant differences (within 4%) between performance of diverse groups of students, e.g. All Ages / Gender / ethnic minorities / LLDD / disadvantaged (post code areas).

Statistics 2024-25

Category	Number of students		
	Whole College	University Centre	Percentage in University Centre
Total Students	5353	1374	25.67
Female Students	489	270	55.21
Ethnic minority Students	1109	247	22.27
Students with disclosed disabilities	1414	240	16.97

From the table above the University Centre represented 24% of the whole college intake for 24-25 with 54% of females in the college being in the UC faculty. Numbers of females and ethnic minority students are steadily increasing in the UC however still underrepresented across the college. These improvements in the UC could be attributed to the diverse promotional 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 ten years the University Centre staff have become much more diverse with excellent role models for female and ethnic minority students to aspire to.

Statistic for the University Centre staff:

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

Postcode Data for University Centre 24-25

The table below shows the postcode location of applicants with 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	301	21.91
Wakefield	101	7.35
Bradford	102	7.42
Calderdale	41	2.98
Kirklees	88	6.40
Other	741	53.93
Total	1374	

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:

- **Fairness** - Treat everyone fairly, consistently and with respect
- **Ownership** - Take responsibility for your own actions and influence
- **Collaboration** - Working together, as a college community, for the whole college
- **Understanding** - Be compassionate, supportive, and empathetic, without judgement
- **Standards** - Set the highest standards for ourselves, our students and our college
- **Equity** - Positively value differences and the lived experience of everyone
- **Deliver** - Do what you say you will do, being reliable and proactive

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

3. 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 £6054 for 26-27. 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.

4. 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 Funding to engage and support disadvantaged students.
- Retention strategies to support students through the whole learning experience from IAG to achievement.
- Maintain and extend partnerships with schools, employers, professional bodies, local authorities, and awarding bodies.
- 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.

Leeds College of Building is committed to aligning our access and participation priorities with the Office for Students' (OfS) strategic objectives and regulatory expectations. In particular, our strategy reflects risks identified in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), including:

- **Underrepresentation of women** in construction-related disciplines.
- **Disparities in outcomes** for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Progression challenges** for students with disabilities and ethnic minorities backgrounds.

We also make use of data from the OfS Access and Participation Data Dashboard, alongside internal performance monitoring, to identify participation gaps, inform intervention design, and

track impact. These tools allow us to make evidence-informed decisions and set priorities that are nationally relevant and locally appropriate.

5. 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 latest certification for Matrix Standard 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 semester 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, Diversity and Inclusion, Examinations, Quality, 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.

Our students play a key role in shaping the direction of access and participation at the University Centre. In addition to participating in the Higher Education Strategic Forum, we aim to:

- Conduct focus groups with current underrepresented students (e.g. ethnic minorities, female apprentices) to inform our outreach and support offer.
- Pilot peer review of outreach materials and HE marketing campaigns with student ambassadors to ensure they are inclusive and accessible.
- Engage student representatives in reviewing the Bridge to HE programme and suggesting improvements to academic preparation and wellbeing support.

Feedback and ideas gathered through these methods directly inform decision making and are reviewed annually as part of our HE self-assessment and planning processes

6. 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, specialist software 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 sustained employer engagement continue to drive strong employment outcomes for LCB HE students. The flagship Technician Apprenticeship Consortium includes two major employer advisory boards, both chaired by employer representatives and incorporating student voices. In addition, Degree Apprenticeship Employer Advisory Boards are held biannually to ensure close

collaboration between the college and industry, informing course content, delivery, and responsiveness to emerging sector needs.

Professional body inclusion and collaboration from the built environment institutions is particularly strong with CIHT, ICE, RICS, CIBSE, and CIOB 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 a multitude of career progression and HE pathways identified for students. These opportunities include architectural technology, health & 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 with several of these being relevant to each selected pathway. This provides students with versatility and flexibility, offering opportunities to connect with a range of potential employers and universities. It allows them to explore diverse career paths without being confined to a single route too early. Employment opportunities are publicised within the College, with tutors supporting students with a host of employability skills to help them present professionally to prospective employers helping 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 and relevant to current industry practices.

7. Collaboration

Leeds College of Building (LCB) remains a committed partner of Go Higher West Yorkshire (GHWY), a well-established consortium of twelve higher education providers across West Yorkshire, including FE colleges with HE provisions and universities. This diverse partnership offers a broad range of courses, qualifications, and flexible modes of study.

We are also an active participant in the Uni Connect Programme, delivered regionally through GHWY. Through Uni Connect, LCB continues to expand its work in supporting young people to achieve their aspirations by addressing academic, financial, and cultural barriers to higher education.

As part of this commitment, the College is involved in delivering a range of tailored outreach initiatives, including:

- 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
- Peer mentoring from a current LCB student to aid transition from school to college
- Talks and Q&A sessions with current Student Ambassadors
- Taster days, workshops, and intensive weeks of taster activities
- Assemblies, school visits and site visits
- Debating challenges, competitions, and employer engagement sessions

- Progression and career pathway presentations

The College Management structure enables 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.

8. Conclusion

Leeds College of Building and the University Centre are committed to widening participation and access to HE for students from all backgrounds. 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.