

Leeds College of Music

2019-20 Access and Participation Plan



Leeds College of Music (LCoM) is a leading European conservatoire. We provide music education to a community of over 1900 musicians through a variety of programmes, including undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses, numerous short courses and Junior LCoM for those aged 9-18. With state-of-the-art facilities and industry-leading staff, the conservatoire continually champions relevant and innovative music education that equips students with the knowledge and skills to meet the demands of a perpetually evolving industry.

We are committed to promoting and safeguarding fair access to our provision, and the highly-selective nature of our work means that this must be addressed in creative ways. We aim to ensure that students who aspire to study at a conservatoire are able to participate, succeed and progress to employment or further study.

This Access and Participation Plan applies to all students who begin an undergraduate course in 2019/20. Students who began in other years will continue to receive the support described in the relevant Access Agreement.

Involvement of under-represented groups

Our access and participation activities have previously been overseen by our Academic Council, including the Students' Union President. To improve the general level of oversight and student involvement, we are transferring this responsibility to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee for 2018/19 onwards and increasing the student membership from one representative to five (the Students' Union EDI Officer, BAME Officer, Disabled Students Officer, LGBTQ+ Officer and Women's Officer). This also aims to improve student consultation on access, success and progression.

Assessment of current performance

We have assessed our current performance in access, success and progression by ethnicity, disability, POLAR quintile and household income, and identified our priorities in these areas, which are increasing the proportion of entrants from BAME backgrounds and from the lowest participation areas, and closing the attainment gaps of those groups of students.

We need to further develop our data capability in terms of analysing the intersections of equality and access characteristics and making use of multiple measures of deprivation. We have small numbers of students who are care leavers, mature

learners and those estranged from their families, and we need to develop our assessment of these groups.

We plan to do this by combining our equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring with access and participation monitoring, through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee.

Access

- i) Ethnicity
The proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students enrolling has increased from 8% to 11% over the last three years, and is now in line with the HESA average for Music (11%). This proportion is half the HESA average for UK HE (22%), which is a challenge for the whole Music sector.
- ii) Disability
A high proportion of our students declare a disability, an average of 25% over the last three years, which is ten percentage points above the HESA average for Music (15%) and thirteen points above the HESA average for UK HE (12%).
- iii) POLAR*
The proportion of our students from the lowest participation areas (POLAR 1) is currently 8%, with a three-year average of 9%, two percentage points below the HESA average for UK HE (11%).
- iv) Household income
Previous Access Agreements have targeted an increase in the proportion of students from the lowest household income band (<£25,000) from a baseline of 33% in 2011/12. This had increased to 37% by 2014/15 but has since fallen back to 31%.

Success

- i) Ethnicity
The gap between the proportion of BAME and White British students achieving has remained at 8% for the past three years. The gap in the failure rate has reduced from 6 percentage points (11% BAME, 5% White British) to 3 percentage points (7% BAME, 4% White British) but the gap in the loss rate has increased from 1 percentage point (8% BAME, 7% White British) to 4 percentage points (13% BAME, 9% White British) over the same period.

We need to understand this better and as part of this plan we will do more

* POLAR4

analysis of multiple characteristics, of the retention gap and of the attainment gap in terms of degree classification in order to compare with the wider sector.

ii) Disability

Since 2013/14, there has been a significant reduction in the gap between students declaring a disability and students declaring no disability achieving, with a 12% gap being completely closed by 2017. We have made significant investment in support for students with disabilities to achieve this.

iii) POLAR[†]

There are significant differences in achievement rates between students from the lowest and highest participation areas; around 10% of students from POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 areas fail compared with around 5% of students from areas of POLAR quintiles 4 and 5. When analysed by level of study, there is a 10% achievement gap between POLAR quintiles 1 and 5 at Level 4, a 1% gap at Level 5 and 8.6% at Level 6.

iv) Household income

We carried out an initial analysis of our financial support provision in 2016/17. This report provided insight into 2960 students who received bursaries from 2011/12 to 2016/17, the relationship between financial support and performance, and how gender, disability and course pathway might affect this relationship. POLAR3 data was also mapped against 1333 students over the same period to assess the relationship between POLAR quintile, bursary, and academic outcome.

The report provided evidence that student bursaries had a beneficial impact on academic outcomes. Students receiving bursaries initially performed at a lower average module mark than non-bursary students, but after three years, although there were still gaps in final learning outcome measured by degree classification and marks, the bursary was shown to narrow the gap. Though there was no true control group, we were able to show that consistent financial support could stabilise the attainment gap between students from different POLAR quintiles[‡]. This research has informed our strategy for providing financial support, and we plan to build on the research in future years using the OfS toolkit.

Progression

Progression to employment or further study is above benchmark in the TEF metrics and there are no negative split metrics.

[†] POLAR 4

[‡] POLAR 3

We recognise, however, that aggregated data may hide indicators of inequality. Longitudinal Educational Outcomes (LEO) data may not be fully representative of our students' outcomes until self-assessment data is included, as many of our graduates go on to be self-employed and/or to have portfolio careers in the creative industries.

Alongside the Graduate Outcomes Survey and LEO data, we are working with our graduates to develop our understanding of their employment and further study outcomes and to identify any areas of inequality. We also need to establish measures of participation in our enterprise and employability activities.

Ambition and strategy

Our Access and Participation priorities are increasing the proportion of entrants from BAME backgrounds and from the lowest participation areas, and closing the attainment gaps of those groups of students. We will seek to do this through a whole student lifecycle approach which begins at primary education age.

Pre-application: raising awareness, aspiration and attainment

As a conservatoire we recruit students through a selective audition process, and early development of young people is crucial for musicians to reach the appropriate standard to be competitive at audition. The national decline in music opportunities in primary and secondary education means that we need to increase our outreach work to raise attainment in schools, raise aspiration to HE music study and reduce barriers to entry.

Our own Junior department is a key element of our strategy; we have had success in providing bursaries for students aged 9-18 to attend our Saturday Music School (SMS). Student numbers have increased from 74 to 157 (112%) over the past seven years, and the number of students from low income backgrounds has increased at a higher rate, from 14 to 42 (180%). Students from low income backgrounds now make up 27% of SMS students, compared with 20% in 2011/12. We will continue to expand and promote this provision, and increase our outreach to young people, working in partnership with schools, Music Hubs and Conservatoires UK.

We will continue our partnership work with schools and increase this in a sustained way, targeting more of our activities towards schools and colleges in low participation areas, and those with high proportions of students from under-represented groups including lower-income backgrounds and from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The city of Leeds and many of its surrounding areas are areas of low participation in HE; we currently recruit just 17% of our HE students from within West Yorkshire; we will seek to increase this through local partnerships with schools and colleges, Music Hubs and the National Collaborative Outreach Programme.

Evaluating the impact of our access activities is a long-term endeavour, particularly tracking young people from primary age into HE. We are investing in systems that will enable the evaluation of our long-term outreach measures and target setting for the future.

Application: reducing barriers to entry and offering advice and support

We continually review our entry requirements and procedures to reduce financial and structural barriers to conservatoire study, for example the removal of some audition fees and formal Music Theory qualifications, aiming to ensure that talented applicants with the potential to succeed are not deterred from applying. Where we charge an audition fee, we provide financial support to applicants from low-income backgrounds.

Our open days and publicity materials aim to raise awareness of the financial and other student support available to applicants and students at the pre-application and application stages. Staff members are available at open day events to provide individual guidance to prospective applicants and their parents or carers.

On-programme: tailored student support and financial support

The small scale of the conservatoire means that we can provide bespoke support to students, including support for disabilities, mental health conditions and students on the autistic spectrum. We provide a personal tutor for all new students, whatever their point of entry, and we provide female personal tutors for female students as they are an underrepresented group within our student population, though this is improving year on year. Regular attendance monitoring and student progress meetings identify students at risk to enable early intervention.

Our financial support scheme provides automatic bursaries for students from lower-income backgrounds and we provide an additional hardship fund for students in particular need. Student financial support and advice are provided by a single team, ensuring a coordinated approach throughout the student lifecycle, and tailored advice for students at risk. A number of targeted actions are undertaken each year aimed at ensuring that all students are receiving the maximum financial support available to them, particularly where they have complex circumstances.

We need to take action to improve our support for BAME students and students from the lowest participation areas to help them to succeed, and we plan to do this by understanding the barriers to success faced by these students, which we will start to address through developing our data analysis. Creating diverse, inclusive, representative and supportive learning environments to close these attainment gaps is a national challenge. We have begun working in partnership with the Leeds City College Group and with Conservatoires UK on a variety of diversity initiatives and will sustain and invest in these activities throughout the life of this Plan.

We do not yet have sufficient insight into how much or how quickly we can reduce these gaps. During 2018/19 we will be working in partnership with our parent company the Leeds City College Group on social mobility as a strategic priority. As part of this we will be conducting further analysis of the student characteristics and reasons behind BAME retention and achievement gaps and the POLAR 1-2 achievement gap. This will enable us to put in place evidence based, targeted interventions for these groups and to commit to meaningful, stretching and outcomes-focused targets in our 2020/21 Access and Participation Plan.

Progression to employment and further study

Enterprise and employability are embedded throughout our HE curriculum, and we provide additional enterprise and career development activities outside the curriculum for both current students and alumni. All students have the opportunity to apply for career development bursaries or match funding to support projects that will enhance their employability.

Our postgraduate provision is small and relatively diverse: 17% of our postgraduate students are BAME and 21% have declared a disability. We have a good level of progression from our undergraduate provision to our postgraduate provision, but a very low number of those who progress are from low income backgrounds (7% or 1 student in 2017/18, and no students in the previous three years). We plan to further increase internal progression from undergraduate to postgraduate study and in particular to increase progression of those from low income backgrounds.

Access, student success and progression measures

Access

- Work in partnership with schools and colleges, through the Partners in Education programme, workshop activities and Leeds Cathedral Choir School partnership, to raise aspiration and attainment. In 2018/19 we will establish a baseline measurement for interventions with schools that have high proportions of underrepresented groups, to inform future targets.
- Provide bursaries for lower-income students to participate in Saturday Music School, and expand outreach work from Junior LCoM to schools in deprived areas of the city region. We will target a continued increase in Junior LCoM students from lower-income backgrounds.
- Provide bursaries for lower-income students to attend Summer Schools.
- Continue to be a learning destination for Children's University.
- Increase our collaborative partnership work with the NCOP (Go Higher West Yorkshire) and join the NCOP on designation as an HEI.

- Provide an Applicants' Bursary, refunding the audition fee and travel expenses for UK applicants from households in receipt of income based benefits and those with a household income of less than £25,000.
- Provide an audition fee refund for applicants from partner schools and colleges, including within the Leeds City College Group.

Success

- Support students with disabilities and learning difficulties through diagnostic testing, mentoring for students who do not qualify for DSA or whose assessment has been delayed, particularly where there are mental health issues; funding for transition work for disabled students at the start and end of their studies; and funding for specialist educational diagnosis of autism. We will target the maintenance of our performance in the achievement rates of disabled students.
- Establish long-term collaborative activities to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and students from the lowest participation backgrounds to succeed, and begin to narrow the attainment gap. We will target an increasing number of targeted interventions per year, as a collaborative target.
- Continue to provide financial support to students, under the following scheme:

LCoM bursary

A cash bursary for Home undergraduates to help with instrument and equipment repairs and purchases, travelling to performances and gigs, clothing for concerts, joining clubs and societies, as well as daily living costs. Students do not need to apply separately for the LCoM bursary - it will be administered via the Student Loans Company's HEBSS full administration service.

Household income [§]	Amount of bursary
£0 to £25,000	£800
£25,001 to £42,875	£400

Accommodation starter voucher

A voucher to help with accommodation set up costs for students from low-income backgrounds moving away from home for the first time. Students who have very limited resources will be able to apply for a voucher, where they are estranged from their parents or are moving from benefits to full-time study.

Access Fund

An emergency hardship fund to assist with short or medium term financial difficulties. Students who need immediate essentials such as travel and food can

[§] as calculated by Student Finance awarding authority

apply for a grant or loan, and are required to engage with advice staff who can help with budgeting, money advice and support with student finance applications.

Progression

- Continue to provide enterprise and career development activities and opportunities outside the curriculum, for current students and alumni. In 2018/19 we will establish a baseline measurement for participation rates of underrepresented groups in enterprise activities.
- Provide £1,000 cash bursaries for Home undergraduates from low-income backgrounds** who progress to postgraduate study at LCoM. Ten bursaries will be available in 2019/20, and where there are more applications than bursaries they will be allocated to those with the lowest household income.

Investment

We will invest 21% of annual higher fee income on access and participation.

To support access, we will increase investment in cash terms and as a proportion of higher fee income (from 4.5% to 6.5%) in order to target an increase in schools outreach and collaborative working.

To support success, we will maintain investment at 2.5% of higher fee income, which will increase in cash terms, to enable sustainable success activities as student numbers grow, and to target new activities relating to the attainment of BAME students and students from the lowest participation areas.

We will reduce the level of financial support for students in cash terms and as a proportion of higher fee income, from 11.4% to 9.9%, so that we can increase our investment in access and success measures. Although we have some evidence that financial support for students supports retention and success, in the absence of a true control group we will need to monitor this change closely to assess any impact of the change.

To ensure that our financial support measures continue to target students' needs, we are acting on student feedback about the payment of the LCoM Bursary, and moving from three instalments to two instalments to improve cash flow. We are also maintaining a hardship fund for students who find themselves in particular need. We will continue to develop our fundraising activities to better support bursaries and scholarships for students from other income sources, and we will continue to target these at lower-income students outside of the Access and Participation Plan.

** as calculated by Student Finance awarding authority at undergraduate level where under 25, or with evidence of taxable household income where over 25.

To support progression, we will maintain investment in cash terms to support enterprise and employability activities beyond those in the curriculum and to support discounts for undergraduate students progressing to postgraduate study. This will fall as a proportion of higher fee income (from 2.6% to 2.0%) so that we can make further investment in access and success. In practice, however, we will invest more in this area from other income sources including fundraising and commercial.

Provision of information to students

We provide current and prospective students with comprehensive information on the financial support available to them and the fees for their course at open days, on our website and in joining instructions.

Staff, including NASMA accredited advisers, are available at all open day events to provide individual guidance to prospective applicants and their parents or carers.

Information and application forms for Applicant's Bursary scheme are sent to all those invited for audition and/or interview.

Our Access and Participation plan will be published on our website.

* course type not listed.

Full-time and part-time course fee levels for 2019-20 entrants.

Please enter inflationary statement in the free text box below.

Leeds College of Music will charge the maximum permitted tuition fee for the academic year 2019-20. Future inflationary increases based on RPI-X may also be applied to each subsequent year of the course, subject to government regulations on fee increases.

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		£9,250
Foundation degree		£9,250
Foundation year / Year 0		£9,250
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Franchise full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*
Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree		*
Foundation degree		*
Foundation year / Year 0		*
HNC / HND		*
CertHE / DipHE		*
Postgraduate ITT		*
Accelerated degree		*
Sandwich year		*
Erasmus and overseas study years		*
Other		*

