



UCG

United Colleges Group

City of Westminster College (CWC)

College of North West London (CNWL)

Access Statement

Information about UCG

United Colleges Group (UCG) was formed in August 2017 as a merger between the City of Westminster College and the College of North West London.

Both colleges operate in very culturally diverse areas and a high proportion of students are from areas classified as economically disadvantaged.

City of Westminster College (CWC) is one of the main providers of post-16 education and training in the Borough of Westminster. City of Westminster College has four sites: the Paddington Green Campus and the Maida Vale Campus. The College also maintains two other sites: the Queens Park Campus (on lease to a local art project) and the Cockpit Theatre, rented to external providers and theatre groups. CWC offers FE provision for most subject areas and recruits around 8,000 students annually, of whom most are aged 16-18. The majority of these learners study full-time, while a large proportion of adult learners are enrolled on part-time programmes. The College's Higher Education provision, in scope for this review, is currently delivered on the Paddington Green Campus.

The College has two partnerships:

- a tri-partite agreement for the Foundation Degree in Music Production and Business, involving the University of Westminster (UoW), CM Ltd (Community Music) and CWC. This Foundation Degree is awarded by the University of Westminster, delivered by CM Ltd in the East End of London. This arrangement terminates at the end of the 2019 academic year.
- a partnership with Middlesex University for the Foundation Degree in Computing (Software Engineering pathway).

The College of North West London (CNWL) is also a general further education college based in the London Borough of Brent with sites in Willesden and Wembley and also at King's Cross in neighbouring Camden.

CNWL teaches around 8000 students per year. This includes a smaller proportion of school leavers on study programmes and a large number of apprentices. CNWL has a high percentage of adult students, including many on part-time courses.

Higher Education courses are well established across UCG and build on the inclusive approach to education that is central to the College's values. Entry qualifications are appropriate to the technical and professional requirements of each course, with English and maths requirements based on a robust initial assessment. This helps facilitate access to students for whom English is not their first language, or who have taken alternative routes through their education.

The College encourages progression from its Level 3 students into HE programmes by developing the learning skills and confidence required. On several of the College's HE courses, more than half the class is made up of students who have progressed internally.

UCG offers a range of HE provision to include Pearson-validated HN programmes and Foundation Degrees validated by Middlesex University. Both FT and PT modes of study are offered with most PT students being employer-sponsored.

College Vision

To be London's best College Group

College Mission

To meet the diverse educational and skills needs of our students and the economy

College Aims

- To ensure all students have an excellent experience and achieve their potential
- To actively promote equality and diversity and oppose discrimination
- To maintain an independent financially strong and sustainably viable college group
- To work effectively with all of our external stakeholders
- To have the highest achievement rates in London
- To have high performing and motivated staff

Fee Limits

The College reserves the right to increase fees below the basic fee level in 18-19 in line with market forces and/or inflation as permitted by the government. Currently this is below £6125 for FT and pro-rata for PT.

EU students are required to pay the same fees as UK nationals. International students on a Tier 4 Visa will pay international tuition fees, available from the International Office and on the website.

The College undertakes to publish clear and accessible information on the level of fees and support offered. This is done primarily through the College websites and prospectuses. UCG undertakes to provide timely and accurate information to UCAS and the SLC.

Financial Support for Students

The majority of current FT HE students qualify for tuition fee loans and some maintenance loan money.

UCG has a HE Hardship fund to which students can apply. Information about this is provided through the Student Services as outlined below.

To be eligible for the HE Hardship Fund students must:

- be in receipt of a full time student loan including the maximum amount of an income assessed Maintenance loan from the Student Loans Company

Please note EU Nationals, who are eligible for tuition fee support only, are not eligible for the HE Hardship Fund (HEFCE Regulations)

You must be:

- accepted onto your chosen course(s) before you apply
- a 'home' student for tuition fees and in most cases have been resident in the UK for 3 years (5 years for EU Nationals)

Your application form will only be accepted if you include your Student Loans Company award letter confirming you have been awarded the maximum amount of an income assessed Maintenance loan. The financial assessment carried out by the SLC will be used to determine your eligibility for the HE Hardship Fund.

- **Students who are not eligible for a full Student Loan including the maximum Maintenance loan will need to complete a supporting statement detailing any exceptional circumstances and provide income/expenditure information for consideration by the Learner Support Fund Panel.**

Equality and Diversity

The Equality Act (2010) underpins the College's inclusive ethos and operational delivery to ensure that no one is directly or indirectly discriminated against because of their protected characteristic.

UCG is committed to ensuring equality in all that it does. The College celebrates and values the diversity brought to its workforce and student body by individuals, and believes that the College benefits from attracting staff and students from a variety of backgrounds.

The College expects all staff and those contracted to provide services to share this commitment.

The College has developed its Equality and Diversity Policy to enable the achievement of its aim of promoting equality and diversity.

The provision of high quality support encompasses study skills, learning support, mental health support, disability support and careers planning and employability.

The College effectively supports students from a wide variety of backgrounds and ensures specialist support for students, where appropriate.

The College has an effective Additional Learning Support School, providing support to students. In the current year there have been referrals for mental health issues and dyslexia needs. All students who are referred are contacted by specialist tutors to arrange support.

As a result of some past retention issues, CM invested in a dedicated study support tutor. This has resulted in improved retention, and in the re-validation of this programmes in 15/16, CM were commended by the panel for, *'The enthusiasm of the group of students met by the Panel and how they have clearly benefited from the course in terms of the support of the course team and this creative environment'*.

Academic and personal support is provided by tutors and course leaders. If appropriate, students will be directed to the Student Services Team who offer support on a wide range of issues, such as counselling, housing, benefits and finance. The College refers people, where necessary, to specialist providers such the Tithe Barn Counselling Service. This year no HE students have made use of this offer.

Some financial support can be provided to students who are in receipt of a student loan for both tuition and maintenance. This year, 35 HE students applied for and were approved to receive support and a total of £17,275 will have been paid to students this year.

Access

Both colleges operate in very culturally diverse areas. The majority of our FT HE students are from areas classified as economically disadvantaged. The vast majority of all our HE students are the first in their families to access this level of study.

The data in the table below indicates that our HE student body is made up of primarily mature students, with a majority on part-time programmes.

A more in-depth analysis of our data indicates that there are possibly two significant areas in which the college appears to be under-represented:

- Traditional school-leavers. Given the role of FE in the areas in which the colleges operate, this is understandable and despite work the College has undertaken the impact has been negligible.
- Female students on part-time courses. These programmes are predominately taken by employer-sponsored students in the construction industry. This industry, at levels from which our students are sponsored, is made up predominately of white males and this reflected in that student group and makes targeting diversifying that group difficult.

To support our students' participation, we know that the majority of current FT HE students qualify for tuition fee loans and some maintenance loan money. However, UCG also has a HE Hardship fund to which students can apply and, those who qualify, can access. Information about this is provided through the Student Services as outlined above.

UCG works with Linking London and the NCOP (National Collaborative Outreach Project) to improve access. UCG regularly attends and contributes to Linking London's practitioner groups including BTEC practitioners, IAG, HE in FE and the Higher and Degree Apprenticeship groups. Linking London's aims are student engagement and achievement, social mobility and improvements in social justice through education to support recruitment, retention and progression into and through higher education, in all its variety, including full and part time, higher apprenticeships, work-based learning and employment. LMI data is collected and shared with partners, a central database of HE provision by members is collated and shared, which improves IAG.

Success and Progression

The students who continue their studies into the second year, are successful. Following feedback from students to improve non-continuation rates and rates of progression of those students who may have to leave after Level 4, all of whom mature; many with work and family commitments; many take study breaks before deciding to progress their studies, the College incorporated flexible delivery into all programmes, to enable students to attend on a part-time basis if they choose.

Progression data is reported at course level and indicates that Level 5 students, who want to progress to further their studies, are able to do so successfully. For example, a majority of students (62%) on the Level 5 Business course, progressed to universities to complete top-up degrees. Almost all PT students are employer-sponsored and continue in work while they study. PT HNC Construction students who wish to progress go to London South Bank University, with a recent comment by the LSBU BEng Course Director that:
... 'students from City of Westminster studying the HNC are the best well prepared students that they receive.'

Access and participation work is supported by HEFCE's Student Opportunity Fund. Annual returns are made in January.

UCG students on a learning aim at level 4 or 5

UCG Data 2017-18	Campus		
	CWC	CNWL	Total
Grand Total	299	143	442
Total headcount for all College enrols (All Ages)	8,289	8,281	16,570
% HE	3.6%	1.7%	2.7%

Age Gp	Campus		
	CWC	CNWL	Total
16-18	15	4	19
19-23	144	65	209
24+	140	74	214
Total	299	143	442

Mode of Attendance	Campus			
	CWC		CNWL	
		%		%
HEFT	112	59.6%	76	40.4%
HEPT	152	69.4%	67	30.6%
HEAPP	35	100.0%		0.0%
Grand Total	299	67.6%	143	32.4%

Gender	Campus		
	CWC	CNWL	Total
F	41	43	84
M	258	100	358
Total	299	143	442

Ethnic Group	Campus		
	CWC	CNWL	Total
White - British	142	41	183
White - Irish		2	2
White - Any other White background	18	23	41
Mixed/Multiple ethnic group - White and Black Caribbean	6	3	9
Mixed/Multiple ethnic group - White and Black African	3	1	4
Mixed/Multiple ethnic group - White and Asian	3	1	4
Mixed/Multiple ethnic group - Other	5	2	7
Asian/Asian British - Indian	10	5	15
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	4	5	9
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	8	1	9

Asian/Asian British - Chinese		1	1
Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background	4	9	13
Black/Black British - African	21	20	41
Black/Black British - Caribbean	29	8	37
Black/Black British - Any other Black background	2	1	3
Arab	3	16	19
Other	11	2	13
Not Known/Provided	30	2	32
	299	143	442