



**United
Colleges
Group**

**Annual Equality,
Diversity & Inclusion
Report: 2023/2024**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this year's Annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report for United College Group (UCG). The report provides an overview of how the college continues to effectively promote and successfully integrate equality, diversity and inclusion into the student experience and highlights the diversity profile of our workforce and the student population.

This annual review builds upon the profile of information provided last year and provides further evidence of the extensive work and commitment that continues to take place across the college. In line with our Statutory Duty, the report brings together relevant information into one place so as to make it easier for you to see the continued progress on equality, diversity and inclusion.

I hope the snapshot of information provided allows you to make a positive judgement on how well the range of services and provision foster, promote and advance equality, diversity and inclusion to continually improve on and successfully fulfil our public duties, under the [Equality Act 2010](#).



Bilal Bobat
Vice Principal

WHO WE ARE

United Colleges Group (UCG) was formed from the merger (1 August 2017), of City of Westminster College and the College of North West London. UCG is one of the largest Further Education Institutions in London serving the communities of central and northwest London for over 130 years across five dedicated college campuses.

College of North West London (CNWL)

The College of North West London is part of the UCG with two campuses located in the London Borough of Brent, at Willesden and Wembley Park. It also runs the Euston Skills Centre in the neighbouring borough of Camden. The college's focus is on providing the skills for career success at a variety of levels to ensure all students have the opportunity to access learning. Teaching and support services are designed to help students develop a range of skills and offer progression routes either into employment or towards university-level study. Offering a broad vocational curriculum to both adults and school leavers. Specialist subject areas include Construction and Engineering, Computing, Media, Science, Care, Salon Services and ESOL. CNWL is also a major provider of apprenticeships in construction, business administration and media roles.

www.cnwl.ac.uk



WHO WE ARE

City of Westminster College (CWC)

City of Westminster College is located in Central London with two campuses at Paddington Green and Maida Vale. It offers over 200 courses across a wide range of both vocational and academic subjects. We have specialist facilities including, science labs, motor vehicle workshops, photography studios, a theatre, TV and Radio studios.

www.cwc.ac.uk



WHO WE ARE

Wembley Park Campus

The Wembley Park Campus is situated near Wembley Stadium. The campus has great hair and beauty training salons which are open to the public. Courses available at this campus include, Hair & Beauty, Business, Accountancy, Health and Social Care, Mathematics and Childcare.
www.cnwl.ac.uk



WHO WE ARE

The Cockpit Theatre

The Cockpit Theatre is a fringe theatre in Marylebone, London. Designed by Edward Mendelsohn and built in 1969-70 by the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) as a community theatre. It is notable as London's first purpose-built Theatre in the round since the Great Fire of London. The Cockpit remains one of a handful of purpose-built theatre training venues in the capital and is still owned and operated by the City of Westminster College.

[www. thecockpit.org.uk](http://www.thecockpit.org.uk)



WHO WE ARE

UCG Sector specialisms include Business & Accountancy, Construction, Engineering, IT, Computing & Robotics, Public Services, Science, Sport, Creative & Digital Industries and Provision for Learners with High Needs.

UCG takes pride in the partnership it has within the London Boroughs of Brent, Camden Westminster City Council and the Greater London Authority. UCG also has extensive and meaningful links with key businesses and industries in London and nationally including Crossrail, London Underground, Skanska and Land Securities, United Biscuits, Arup, Atkins, McLaren, Goldman Sachs and the Creative Industries.

UCG are one of the largest providers of Higher Education in Further Education in London, working in partnership with a comprehensive range of universities including Westminster, Middlesex, London South Bank, and the University College London Institute of Education and Birkbeck.

The Group has the capacity to respond effectively to the skills needs of London, and to offer education and training in almost all vocational areas at a variety of levels for a wide range of learners of all ages and starting points.



EQUALITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (EDI) COMMITMENTS

We are committed to a culture and set of values that seek to ensure:

- All colleagues, students and visitors should experience a supportive and nurturing environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- Inappropriate behaviour and discriminatory practice are not tolerated and challenged.
- Colleagues, students, applicants for employment or study, visitors and other persons in contact with the Group are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Fair and equitable practices and procedures are designed to help members of our community to feel comfortable, and where individual differences are recognised and valued.
- Support is provided to colleagues, students and our partners to help them understand and meet their equality and diversity responsibilities and share the Group's corporate responsibility to embed equality, diversity and inclusion through the provision of its services and function.

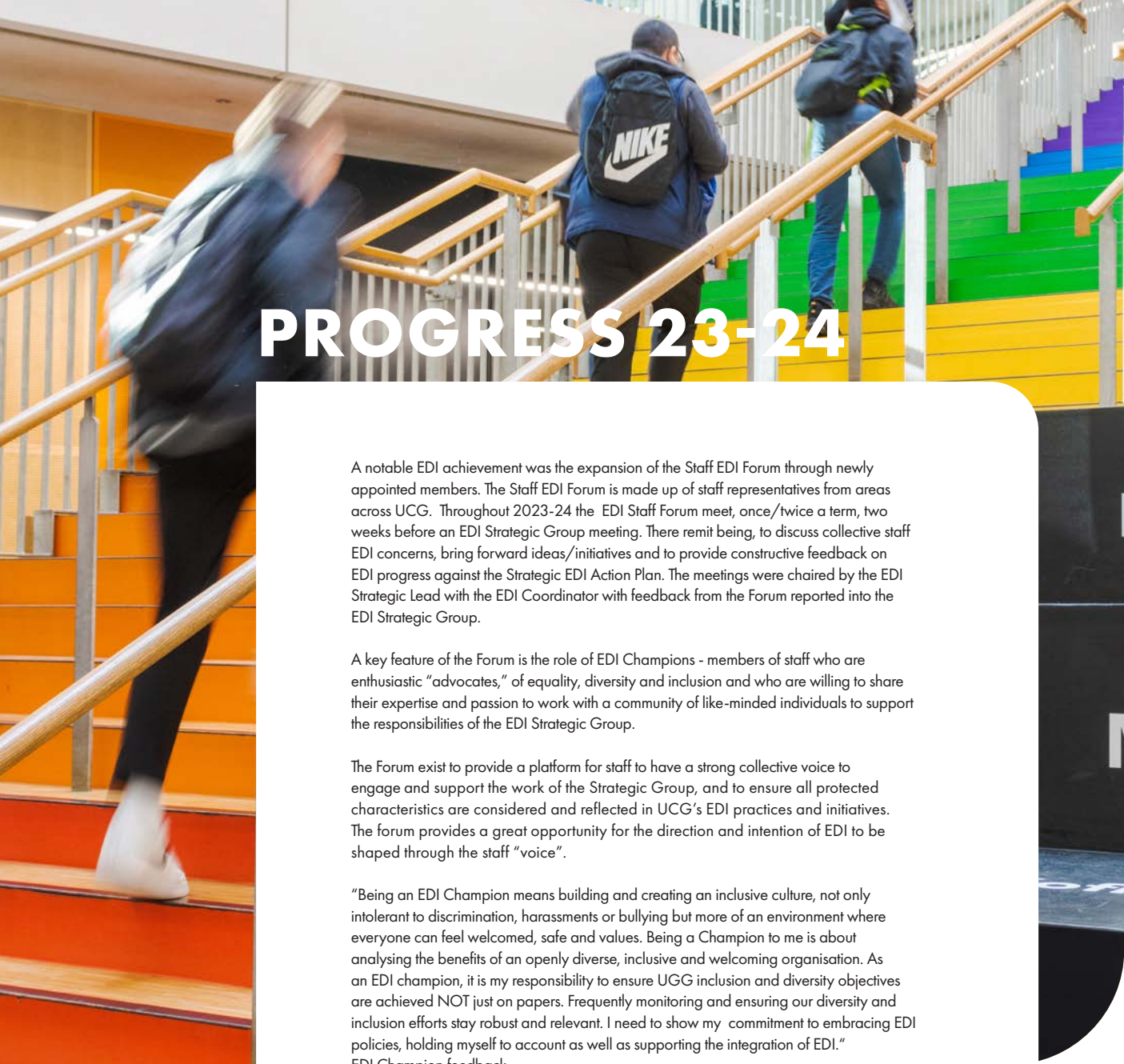


LEARNER VOICE

UCG continues to develop a comprehensive mixture of ways to involve and provide opportunities for students to voice their views and shape their learning. Underpinning the Learner Engagement Strategy is the Learner Engagement Plan that contains a range of effective initiatives to empower and encourage Learner feedback and the active promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion. Examples of this work includes:

- 178 students as class representatives and 19 Student Union officers, who reflect the broad range of protected characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, gender assignment and ethnicity.
- Ensure learners are communicated with promptly and inclusively facilitated via portal communication, Promonitor, letters/email/text, MyDay, noticeboards and plasma screens.
- Teachers involve learners in negotiating what they learn, how they learn and what support they require via learner feedback and “Meet the Manager” meetings.
- Student Services provided training for Student Union/Council members and worked with them to elect voluntary officers as agreed by learners e.g. EDI Officer, Promotions & Marketing Officer. They facilitated an inclusive, diverse and accessible working environment and agree annual priorities and events.
- Student Services and Heads of Service agreed bespoke marketing and advertising to ensure inclusivity and representation from all Career Cluster cohorts, ages and ethnic groups. Methods of learner feedback and evaluation is agreed by learners to inform future enrichment activities.
- “Career Cluster Forums”, attended by Course Reps and chaired by Curriculum Leads and “Learner Forums”, attended by senior management, Lead Course Reps and Student Council Representative.
- Formal and informal feedback on a range of enrichment events to ensure enrichment activities are accessible for all cohorts, are inclusive and strive to actively engage those that may not normally engage.
- Student Union meetings provided a forum to explore and get feedback on EDI concerns, initiatives and which are attended by 2 dedicated Student EDI Officers.
- Feedback thorough Student Focus Groups, Surveys such as the biannual Learner Satisfaction Surveys (Teaching and Learning); and from curriculum forums.
- Nominated Student Members who met with SLT & invited Governors for an informal feedback sessions, where issues relating to teaching and learning were raised and the Student Governor who attended the Board of Governors to feedback on Student issues.
- Supporting staff recruitment through participating in the micro teaching session used for all staff who teach as part of the interview process.
- Course Reps and SU involved with external organisations with community related projects around the College campus.

Through the board range of opportunities outlined, students are involved in the decision-making process and have the opportunity in line with the Learner Engagement Strategy to improve the learning environment for themselves and others through a collaborative approach where “all learners have an excellent experience and achieve their potential”.



PROGRESS 23-24

A notable EDI achievement was the expansion of the Staff EDI Forum through newly appointed members. The Staff EDI Forum is made up of staff representatives from areas across UCG. Throughout 2023-24 the EDI Staff Forum meet, once/twice a term, two weeks before an EDI Strategic Group meeting. Their remit being, to discuss collective staff EDI concerns, bring forward ideas/initiatives and to provide constructive feedback on EDI progress against the Strategic EDI Action Plan. The meetings were chaired by the EDI Strategic Lead with the EDI Coordinator with feedback from the Forum reported into the EDI Strategic Group.

A key feature of the Forum is the role of EDI Champions - members of staff who are enthusiastic “advocates,” of equality, diversity and inclusion and who are willing to share their expertise and passion to work with a community of like-minded individuals to support the responsibilities of the EDI Strategic Group.

The Forum exist to provide a platform for staff to have a strong collective voice to engage and support the work of the Strategic Group, and to ensure all protected characteristics are considered and reflected in UCG’s EDI practices and initiatives. The forum provides a great opportunity for the direction and intention of EDI to be shaped through the staff “voice”.

“Being an EDI Champion means building and creating an inclusive culture, not only intolerant to discrimination, harassments or bullying but more of an environment where everyone can feel welcomed, safe and values. Being a Champion to me is about analysing the benefits of an openly diverse, inclusive and welcoming organisation. As an EDI champion, it is my responsibility to ensure UGG inclusion and diversity objectives are achieved NOT just on papers. Frequently monitoring and ensuring our diversity and inclusion efforts stay robust and relevant. I need to show my commitment to embracing EDI policies, holding myself to account as well as supporting the integration of EDI.”
EDI Champion feedback.

The Strategic EDI Objectives for 2023-24 were compiled and updated from the remaining actions from the previous academic year, staff and student feedback and inputs from the various EDI Leads. The resultant Strategic EDI Action Plan was subject to continuous review and monitored by the EDI Strategic Group each term. To view an extensive sample of EDI achievement for 2023-24 please [click here](#)

In addition, a range of information was used to identify opportunities for professional and personal developmental activities as part of a central programme of activities such as:

- Workshops specifically to support staff with understanding Neurodiversity, **“Made me think differently about my staff and students. Thanks for this wonderful session”** and Gender Identity (Trans & Non-Binary Awareness).
- Staff CPD which continued to systematically include a focus on EDI characteristics and achievement gaps, with further workshops on trauma informed learning to embed the learning outcomes into the curriculum.
- Staff continue to have access to the suite of AOC course such as the Diversity in Leadership Programme and the Black Leadership Group Mentor Programme and also the Department for Education (DFE) Leadership Mentoring Programme, which uses positive action to encourage applications from those from an Ethnically Diverse background.

PROGRESS 23-24

- Bespoke opportunities saw UCG’s EDI team attend ‘Just One More Thing’ conference, sponsored by the Department for Education. The conference allowed colleagues from the Further Education sector and outside of the sector to consider and reflect on race inequality, exploring good practice and innovative approaches.
- Unconscious Bias Training piloted with HR and selected nominees from support services.

“This training was one of the best I have done at UCG, it was very informative and fun. The fidget toys around the room made it easier to focus on the whole training and live actors made it engaging.”

UCG continued to have the progress made on the commitment to advance and achieve best practice in equality diversity and inclusion validated by external independent organisations:

- During the year, pro-active steps were taken to achieve the Silver Award from Educate and Celebrate (now known as PRIDE in EDI). The external accreditation recognised the continued work undertaken at UCG to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ staff, students, staff and visitors.
- Alongside this, UCG were nominated and shortlisted for the UnderOne Diversity & Inclusion award, in the category of ‘Diverse & Inclusive Company Culture. This prestigious award exist to showcase and celebrate champions of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion), who integrate these values into the fabric of their organisation’s DNA. Fellow organisations nominated in this category were HSBC, University of Law, Citi Bank and Pan McMillan.
- Achievement of the prestigious Investors in People (IiP) award which had a series of dedicated EDI related actions. UCG have now created an action plan in order to continue the journey to IiP Gold by 2027 which embeds a range of EDI initiatives.
- Building upon the Level 1 achievement, UCG obtained from The Department of Work & Pensions, The Disability Confident Employer Award Level 2 in recognition of the continued focus and commitment to support those with a disability, who are seeking work or employed in an organisation.

“There is a commitment to embracing and supporting diversity, equality, and inclusion. There is an ED&I strategic action plan that is comprehensive and includes training and CPD”
– IiP Report 2024



02

CURRICULUM AND STUDENT SUPPORT

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion remains central to the vision of the Group to transform lives through providing exceptional education and training. The Group's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is successfully reflected through the curriculum, enrichment activities and the provision of a range of direct and indirect student support services.



LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRES

Through the respective College Learning Resources Centres (LRCs), UCG offers excellent support to students and staff. The Centres provide outstanding wide-reaching support for students and staff. Library staff worked closely with curriculum teams and centre management to deliver targeted support which meets students' needs, develops their skills and supports them to progress and achieve.

Learning Resources Centres (LRCs) provided an extensive range of exceptional enrichment activities and events which are linked to the curriculum, are well planned, have good participation and ensure the development of students' skills, knowledge and understanding.

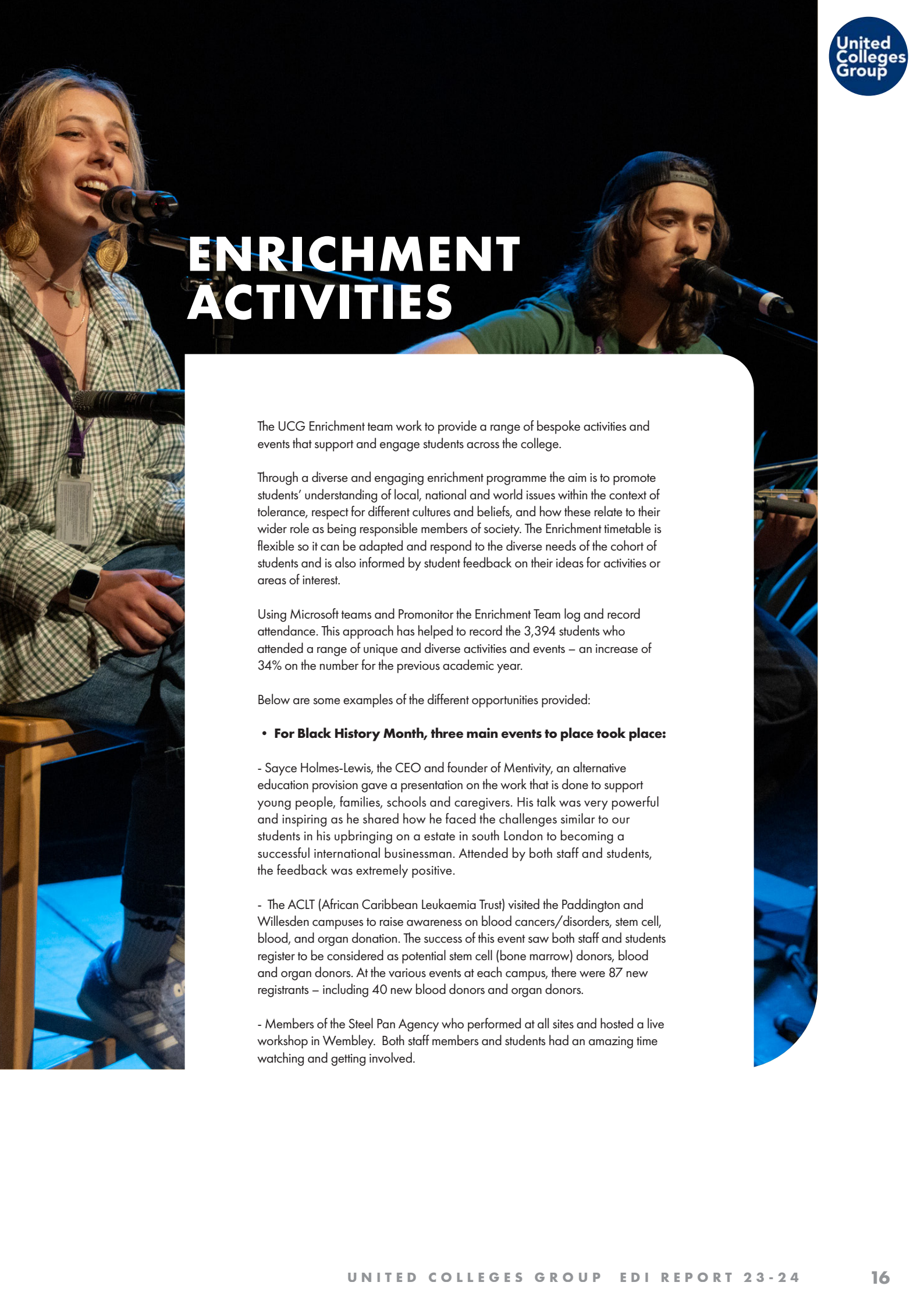
Throughout the academic year students across the Group experienced a number of key activities. Examples of these include:

- Assistive technologies and equipment provided to encourage and support learners with a disability to be able access and use resources, including:
 - iPad/laptops, large keyboard/mouse, magnifier tool, hearing aid loop, software for learners with visual impairment and "Dragon" voice-activated software for students with hearing impairments.
 - A Laptop self-service system was introduced at the Maida Vale and Paddington Campus which allowed students to borrow laptops anytime during opening hours.
 - Support with Office 365 application such as MS Teams which allowed students to communicate and collaborate. Also Office 365 has various accessibility features such as Zoom, Larger Text, increase Contrast and Voice Over.
- LRC's promoted and participated in a range of enrichment events such as:
 - Black History Month
 - Mental Health Week
 - LGBTQ+ Month
 - International Women's day

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRES

- The Supported Studies classes regularly booked areas of the LRC (e.g. the Study Centre in the Willesden and Paddington Green LRC) for student activities aided by LRC staff in conjunction with the Additional Learning Support Service.
- The LRC continue to have an excellent understanding of their centre's provision and the programme of activities is targeted to meet Personal Development Behaviours and Welfare.
- Physical adjustments with library counters accommodated to meet the needs of wheelchair users, while the height of bookcases allows all students to easily access books on the shelves.
- A range of EDI books purchased for both Colleges, providing Learners with materials from authors who reflect the different protected characteristics and to have dedicated areas within the LRCs for the collections of books some of which were requested by the Enrichment Team.
- The LRCs participated in the mini-Job project that employs students with Learning Difficulties in different services at UCG, providing opportunities for students to undertake work experience in an LRC setting.
- Provided curriculum and literacy resources in different formats to suit a range of diverse student needs e.g. E books, large print, audio books, multimedia (e.g. DVDs, CDs) and online reference sources.
- The LRCs reflected a range of learning needs e.g. areas for group work, quiet study and bookable area for classes and opening hours that accommodated day and evening students.
- During the enrolment periods, LRC staff actively supported a range of students, undertaking initial assessments, queue management, and application assistance.
- All LRC staff are part of the Ask Angela programme (designed to help students who feel at risk/vulnerable) and have a number of staff who are Mental Health First Aider (MHFA).

“LRCs are key to supporting students’ development”.
SAR 2023-24 Report



ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

The UCG Enrichment team work to provide a range of bespoke activities and events that support and engage students across the college.

Through a diverse and engaging enrichment programme the aim is to promote students' understanding of local, national and world issues within the context of tolerance, respect for different cultures and beliefs, and how these relate to their wider role as being responsible members of society. The Enrichment timetable is flexible so it can be adapted and respond to the diverse needs of the cohort of students and is also informed by student feedback on their ideas for activities or areas of interest.

Using Microsoft teams and Promonitor the Enrichment Team log and record attendance. This approach has helped to record the 3,394 students who attended a range of unique and diverse activities and events – an increase of 34% on the number for the previous academic year.

Below are some examples of the different opportunities provided:

- **For Black History Month, three main events to place took place:**

- Sayce Holmes-Lewis, the CEO and founder of Mentivity, an alternative education provision gave a presentation on the work that is done to support young people, families, schools and caregivers. His talk was very powerful and inspiring as he shared how he faced the challenges similar to our students in his upbringing on a estate in south London to becoming a successful international businessman. Attended by both staff and students, the feedback was extremely positive.

- The ACLT (African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust) visited the Paddington and Willesden campuses to raise awareness on blood cancers/disorders, stem cell, blood, and organ donation. The success of this event saw both staff and students register to be considered as potential stem cell (bone marrow) donors, blood and organ donors. At the various events at each campus, there were 87 new registrants – including 40 new blood donors and organ donors.

- Members of the Steel Pan Agency who performed at all sites and hosted a live workshop in Wembley. Both staff members and students had an amazing time watching and getting involved.



ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- The college hosts a Fresher’s Fair at the beginning of each academic year. The aim is to use this event to informally introduce new and existing students to the college by showcasing a range of organisations and to showcase interactive activities. Over 1,100 students across three campuses had access to such organisations as ACLT (African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust), Terrence Higgins, National Citizen Service, Track Academy, Key4Life. In addition, activities and games offered include the MovenSmooth Bikes – a bike that makes a smoothie whilst you pedal, and Virtual Reality Headgear.
- Enrichment Exercise Programme during each term offered a rich variety of activities such as Badminton, Basketball, Boxing, Dance, Football and Volleyball. In response to feedback and to encourage more female participation, female only gym, football and basketball sessions were provided. All the activities are free to use, and students also have access to discounted external gym/ leisure facilities.
- Supported Learning Sports and Activity sessions for students with a disability to help promote physical activity, agility, balance, coordination, team working and communication. This included the use of Virtual Reality headset sensory activities linked to sporting equipment such as table tennis balls.

International Women’s Week: At each goodie bags were handed out to students, in exchange for them completing a small task relevant to the theme of the campaign. Students were encouraged to write on a post-it note “What equity means to you? Why you feel it is important? And what can be done to increase equity within our society.” Below are a some of the responses received:

“ Being a women means being strong, resilient and knowing your worth.”

“A woman means being confident and powerful. Able to take her own decisions.”



ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- Music Appreciation offered on a weekly basis. This allows students the opportunity to have guitar lessons, use a radio booth to create music, record a podcast or even create a music video.
- Advocate/Disciplinary, a service provided to support students, when they are facing a disciplinary. Students have the option of bringing in a guardian or a member of the Enrichment team to advocate for them within the disciplinary process. This additional support provides an extra advocate to help students who can sometimes feel overwhelmed and under pressure in this type of situation. The presence of the enrichment team can also help to ensure the process is fair and only the relevant information is discussed.
- In addition, the enrichment team also offer mediation and mentoring through either the disciplinary process, via a referral from assistant principals/ curriculum managers/ student support services or through self-referral.
- Gang Awareness Week where a member of the Integrated Gangs & Exploitation Unit provided 5 workshops to enlighten students on gangs and grooming. Through the power of true life stories the attention of students were captured and exposed to the grim reality of "gang life".
- Ramadan celebration where staff and students broke their fast to have a meal together, known as the Iftar. Over 100 people attended including staff and students alongside members of the local community. It was a great way to bring the local community, staff, and students together.

"I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the wonderful Iftar that was organised. It was an incredible opportunity to come together and celebrate the breaking of the fast."

Student Feedback

- Working in collaboration with the Student Union on a range of termly events. These included the very popular annual Christmas Party, UCG Got Talent and the Cultural Day.
- Supported the first ever UCG Got Talent Show where roughly 150 students joined in the celebration of the diverse talents of students. There were a range of acts varying from singing, street dancing and spoken word. Parents were also invited to join the celebration.



ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- Food Bank and Clothes Bank programme. After being made aware of students who were unable to participate in class or enrichment activities due to hunger, a member of staff initiated the UCG Food & Clothing Bank. This help and support continues to be an inspirational project that provides students with key items for everyday life.

“Enrichment provision is good and reaches a broad range of students. We provide for learners’ broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents beyond the curriculum”.

SAR 2023-24 Report



STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR LEARNING DIFFICULTY

UCG offers a range of student-focused and ambitious learning experiences for all students whilst implementing an inclusive and supportive approach for those with mental health difficulties, neurodiversity, sensory needs, learning difficulties and disabilities.

Through the dedicated work of the Additional Learning Support (ALS) and Supported Learning (SPL) Teams, there were throughout the year a number of key accomplishments and events across the group in regard to the support (the teaching, learning, assessment) and outcomes for students with high needs these include:

- Excellent links with external agencies such as Local Authorities 'Teachers of the Deaf' who in conjunction with UCG have a well-established specialist hub for students with hearing impairments which focuses on socialisation, along with academic support. This is supported by the Local Authorities of Brent and The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.
- In response to the identified additional barriers faced by deaf learners, the Additional Learning Support (ALS) team offered training to all Career Clusters. A deaf learner on the Level 5 Diploma for Education training programme delivered deaf awareness sessions to teachers in the English department which was highly effective. As a result, an English workshop has been set up specifically for deaf learners to support them to improve their English reading and writing skills. This session is being provided through the collaboration of the English department and the ALS team.
- Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) from both the SPL and ALS teams undertook the ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) training to further enhance support for learners with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health). This complemented the trauma-informed training and approach UCG is taking in order to ensure the needs of our learning community are understood and met.
- Continued fostering of positive working relationships with local boroughs and specialist provisions in order to support learner transition to post-16 education.
- Excellent working relationships with external organisations and support workers to accommodate external support provision onsite at college campuses and the utilisation of their disability awareness training offerings. This includes working with Visual impairment and hearing impairment teachers and consultants, Speech and Language Therapists, communication support workers and Educational Healthcare Care Plan (EHCP) caseworkers.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR LEARNING DIFFICULTY

- A new changing room was installed at the Paddington Campus in order to provide a modern and comfortable space to meet the personal care of learners with complex needs.
- A new social skills club was set up for learners who struggle with social communication and making friends. This club has been very successful with a growing membership.

“I really like the social skills club. It is good fun and I have learnt about boundaries and keeping safe when talking to people I don’t know. I have also made new friends”.

Student Feedback

- Brent EP service developed a healthy relationships programme to enable support staff with developing strategies. These include some theoretical underpinning work on modelling positive behaviours, and an introduction to the Diamond 9, an intervention model. In 2023-2024 similar trainer workshops were offered to a number of staff from the ALS and SPL teams.
- Specialist approaches have been successfully embedded in practice across the Independent Living and Complex Needs strands with teachers using active learning strategies, transactional supports, and the zones of regulation framework. This has resulted in higher levels of student engagement and participation, with students acquiring new skills more rapidly.
- Introduction of streamed English and maths lessons for students on non-accredited pathways at the Maida Vale Campus, combined with an active, game-based delivery has resulted in students making rapid progress towards their Individual Learning Plans (ILP) and EHCP outcomes.
- Highly effective liaison between Speech and Language Therapy teams, teachers and Learning Support Assistants has resulted in the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication devices (including Eye Gaze and Clicker) being effectively embedded in the curriculum. The outcome being students improving their communication skills and independence, and being more effectively able to participate in college life, make choices and engage with others.
- There is a highly effective planning and implementation of individualised, practical strategies for supporting students with emotional regulation needs at the Maida Vale Campus. This results in excellent behaviour for learning. All learners on the Independent Living Skills and Employability strands have an individual toolkit of practical strategies to support their emotional regulation, the use of which is effectively integrated across the curriculum.



STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR LEARNING DIFFICULTY

- An outstanding range of connections with external organisations, have led to an enriched curriculum, with a diverse range of inclusive activities that holistically address the social, emotional and physical aspects of learning. Examples include Special Educational Needs (SEN) Marathon, Dance Westminster Competition, Sports For Confidence (cycling, swimming), accessing community resources in fun weeks (museums, bowling, restaurants, cinema), and the DofE Bronze and Silver awards.
- Employability strand students have accessed work-based learning projects with ZSL London Zoo and Petite Miracles upcycling project.
- Students from across the independent living strand and employability strands attended a number of external events at Lord's Cricket Club as part of Mental Health Awareness Week. These raised awareness of and promoted strategies to maintain good mental health, and enhanced students' understanding of mental health issues.
- Read and Write Assistive Technology Training for ALS tutors and LSAs reduced the reliance on human readers for Exam Access Arrangements, with software being accessible on the staff and student network. Software training is being rolled out to Curriculum Tutors to enable implementation in teaching and learning.
- CPD sessions were organised/delivered during Team meetings to include Exam Invigilation for SEND learners with Exam Access Arrangement (EAA), Visual Impairment implications and Support strategies, Supporting Learners with Challenging Behaviour, Embedding Technology for inclusion with support, Understanding and Supporting Learners with Dyslexia with Read and Write, Inclusive approaches with Maths and English for post 16 learners.

“From the first moment I walked through the doors of the college, the ALS department have been supportive of my needs. They have helped me to grow from a young girl who couldn't get on a bus by herself to the young woman, I am today on her way to University. For that I am truly grateful”.
Student Feedback



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Team at UCG continues to uphold an inclusive and supportive approach, ensuring that all students across all campuses have equal access to mental health services. The priority is to provide support for students who may feel disadvantaged, ensuring they are equipped to access the same opportunities as their peers, regardless of their mental health challenges.

The student-centered approach, driven by the belief that “early intervention means retention,” focuses on identifying and addressing students’ mental health needs as early as possible. This philosophy benefits not only the students but also the team, staff and the college. The Team are committed to reducing the stigma surrounding mental health and promoting awareness of equality and diversity, especially among students with mental health concerns and to create an inclusive, supportive, and stigma-free environment for all learners.

Throughout the academic year, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team has worked closely with both internal and external stakeholders to implement several important initiatives:

- Developed strong working relationships with all curriculum areas, the Senior Leadership Team, Safeguarding Officers, Curriculum Managers, Teachers and Support Staff. These collaborations have been essential in raising awareness about the range of services available and to reduce the stigma associated with mental health among students.
- Partnered with external organisations such as Social Services and Community Mental Health Teams to provide additional support when needed. This has included working with social workers, occupational health professionals, care coordinators, and support workers to offer holistic care to students.
- Organised a range of mental health awareness events across all campuses, giving students the opportunity to participate in activities such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day. These events were well-received, and students had access to information about both internal support services and external organisations offering mental health resources. This helped raise awareness of mental health issues and showcased our inclusive approach to student well-being.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT

- Provided access to a range of supportive services, especially for students who may not have accessed mental health support in their communities, in a safe and non-discriminatory environment. This access promotes a sense of inclusion and value for all students, regardless of their mental health concerns.
- Worked closely with Student Services and the Safeguarding Team to foster a student-centered approach to mental health support. This collaboration has helped the Team to identify the overall demand for mental health and wellbeing services, ensuring that the daily/on-going concerns faced by students are addressed.
- Weekly one-on-one support to students at all campuses, with referrals to external agencies made when necessary. This consistent support has been crucial in meeting the mental health needs of our learners.
- Offered, through our partnership with the Brent Mental Health Commissioning Team, staff with opportunities for personal and professional development. This collaboration has allowed team members to stay informed about changes in the mental health field and access training courses and conferences that enhance their skills.
- Collaborated with the Learning Support Department in fulfilling the needs identified for students with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP). This includes facilitating assessments for dyslexia, addressing medical needs, and providing hearing and visual impairment support, exam concessions and additional help with functional skills.
- Regularly attend review meetings with professionals involved in students' care. These meetings help to contribute to students' learning progression and address any concerns that may be hindering their academic success.

“I have a severe mental health condition, which has an ongoing impact on my day-to-day life. I found it very difficult to concentrate or to commit to anything in my life. I decided to take on this course with doubt of not completing. However, after receiving support from the MHWB I have become very hopeful that I am very much capable of completing my course. My whole life has changed as a result”.
Student Feedback

PREVENT AND BRITISH VALUES

Under the Prevent duty (introduced as part of the Prevent Legislation in September 2015) Colleges are required to exemplify British values in their practice and to use opportunities to explore British values and to challenge extremism. British values are defined as:

"...democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs."

Included in the Prevent duty is the expectation staff will encourage students to respect other people with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

With the aim of protecting young people from the risk of radicalisation and raising awareness of British (Our Values), UCG appointed staff to lead and to support the implementation of its approach. A fundamental theme being to help Students explore what are "British values", how this relates to them being an active and responsible member of society and to broaden their awareness of different people and communities.

Upon this backdrop, key features of an integrated approach across the various sites highlight the following:

- Embedded within UCG's tutorial schedule for students are a range of resources that include material and a tutorial outline that focus on British Values and Staying Safe online which includes the aspect of radicalisation.
- A series of workshops under the banner of "Your Voice, Your Views" in partnership with Brent Prevent Team. This included the:
 - BRAVE workshop with a focus on violent extremism, its parallels, and connections to gang exploitation. Allied to this were a range of vulnerabilities that can affect the lives of young people. This was delivered by the St Giles Trust.
 - Future Leaders workshop that educates young people about the dangers of radicalisation and the recruitment strategies extremists use. The aim being to create empowered young people who feel confident enough to challenge extremist views with their peers and family groups by providing counter narratives to extremism and terrorism.
 - Lived experience of the presenter of the Small Steps Workshop who joined a right-wing extremist group at the age of fifteen before leaving and rejecting his racist past. He utilised his unique expertise to reveal a compelling and frightening story of how anyone can become an extremist.



PREVENT AND BRITISH VALUES

- Gangs Awareness Sessions, which took place at the Kings Cross Campus following three incidents. These were facilitated by an external professional to ensure students understood the risk around gangs and how to safeguard themselves.
- Provided intensive workshops that covered knife crime and gangs, and took place at the Willesden, Wembley & Paddington campuses. These were targeted at young people exposed to or at risk of violence, vulnerability and exploitation.
- ‘Educate Against Hate’ material made available to curriculum teams to support & enhance the work on raising discrimination awareness amongst students.
- On the Education Hub, resources shared by DfE, following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine are available. The resources are a compilation of useful advice and classroom resources for teachers, on how to help young people talk about distressing and complex news stories and how to spot mis-and disinformation.
- Mandatory Safeguarding & the Prevent Duty Training for all new staff and governors on a yearly basis delivered by the Safeguarding Team.
- The Westminster Prevent Team provided a bespoke workshop for members of the Safeguarding Team, while this group of staff also attended a session run by the Westminster Integrated Gangs & Exploitation Unit on this subject.
- Building upon the specific curriculum material to support the embedding of Prevent and British Values into Apprenticeships further collaboration took place to raise the profile of Prevent for this group. Facilitated by Brent Council Prevent Team with a focus on first year apprentices, training on Prevent took place on-line so as to allow all to access the training regardless of their location and also face to face. Employers were also be invited to attend the training.
- Throughout the academic year an Apprentice calendar of events covered Prevent on a regular basis, while a Prevent treasure hunt was created for students as an additional resource. Improved collaboration with the apprenticeship management team helped to successfully raise the profile of Safeguarding and Prevent.

“As a result of these interventions, apprentices can confidently discuss personal development subject matter, such as British values, understanding Prevent and radicalisation.”
SAR 2023-24 Report



PREVENT AND BRITISH VALUES

- Prevent Days, delivered in partnership with the respective Prevent Teams from Brent and Westminster Councils. These awareness-raising workshops were provided throughout the year on various sites for all staff and students. The feedback from students and staff was positive and as a follow up to these, separate sessions were planned for female students to discuss the role of females in extremism and radicalisation.
- Throughout the year with the primary objective of providing comprehensive support to our students, UCG had a presence at a range of meetings. These serve as valuable platforms for collaborating with external organizations, such as social services, law enforcement agencies, and other relevant stakeholders, to address the diverse needs of our students. From their representation at a number of platforms UCG receive up to date information on the communities we serve and inform the workshops/tutorials that are delivered. These include the relevant interest groups such as:
 - London FE College Prevent Network
 - Brent Prevent Delivery Group
 - Brent Violence Against Women and Girls Panel
 - Extremism, Violence & Vulnerabilities panel for Brent
 - Brent Safeguarding Forum
 - Post 16 Education Panel for Islington
 - Camden Prevent Forum
 - Stop & Search Group for Westminster

UCG has a holistic, integrated, and engaging range of enrichment activities that seeks to promote students' understanding of local, national and world issues within the context of tolerance, respect for different cultures and beliefs, and how these relate to their wider role as being responsible members of society.

“Through Support Services, events and Tutorials students continue to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. Diversity is celebrated and learners develop their understanding and appreciation through the celebration of diverse cultures and promoting respect for different protected characteristics, as defined in law. 96% of learners agreed in the May 2024 Student Survey that Learners from different backgrounds work well together”.
SAR 2023-24 Report.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BY ETHNICITY

Retention and Achievement improved from 2022-2023. In summary, overall 16-18 Learner achievement was up 4.9% to 75.6%, with overall retention increased by 9.8% to 93.5%. For 19+ adult learners' achievement was at 86.7% up 3.7%, with the retention increased by 4.6% to 83%.

The improved overall academic performance in 2023/24 is reflected in the performance of learners from diverse ethnic backgrounds with the largest numbers improving their achievement on their courses and in many cases achieving above the overall college headline performance levels.

The diversity of our learners continues to be a key strength of the college which reflects the communities we serve. We remain ambitious for those communities by improving the life chances of everyone who engages with us by working with our learners to make them successful. We achieve this through an inclusive, learner focused and trauma informed approach offering wrap around support for our learners to achieve their qualifications, exceed their target grades, and progress to higher level study or employment.

Our key strengths in 2023/24 include:

16-18 Learners

- Other Asian achievement rate increased by 7.2% - 3.3% above the college 16-18 headline figure at 78.9%.
- Other White 16-18 achievement rate increased by 5.1% - 3% above the college 16-18 headline at 78.6%.
- Arab 16-18 achievement rate increased by 6.3% - 0.7% above the college 16-18 headline at 76.3%.
- African 16-18 achievement rate increased by 4.4% - 0.5% above the college 16-18 headline at 76.1%.

(Achievement improved for learners from 8 different ethnic groups)

19+ Learners

- Achievement rate for Other White learners increased by 6.5% - 3.1% above the college 19+ headline at 89.8%
- Achievement rate for Other Asian learners increased by 2% - 0.9% above the college 19+ headline at 87.6%.

(Achievement improved for learners from 10 different ethnic groups)



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT BY ETHNICITY

A revised Quality Assurance process was implemented in 2023/24 supported by a Quality Assurance Handbook. UCG's Quality Cycle is a systematic and continuous process to assess, monitor, and enhance the quality of education and services we provide for learners. Our Developmental Observation model is a strand of activity that sits alongside this to form a holistic approach to improving and developing the Quality of Education through attention to Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Performance and Quality and Curriculum Leadership and Management.

Our Student Support Services, Safeguarding, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Careers, Enrichment, Work Experience, and Learning Resource Centre teams support the wider experience, skills, and personal and professional development of our learners.

By using the framework of the UCG Method and the six priorities of teaching learning and assessment we ensure the best and most appropriate teaching and learning strategies are used to engage and support all learners. This is further supported by the introduction of the analysis of EDI data, with reports and accompanying action plans developed by each Career Cluster, to identify the specific action to be taken to support the rate of achievement between different groups of students.



03

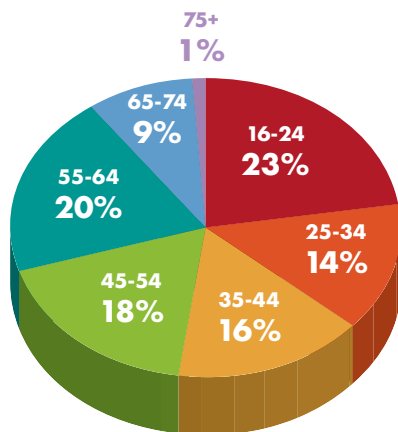
MONITORING

In line with best practice, UCG continues to monitor the profile of its students and staff. This section looks at each of the protected characteristics for both staff and students (where applicable) and identifies any changes or trends in the data.

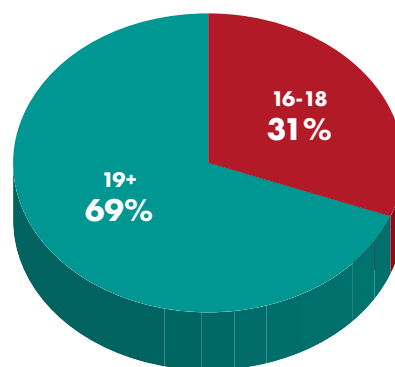
Where possible the diversity profile for UCG has been benchmarked against the equality, diversity and inclusion trends and developments for staff in the FE Sector and beyond.

AGE

Employees



Students



Employees

The highest proportion of employees has now shifted from being the 55-64 age group in previous years to age group 16-24 (23%). This continues and builds upon the rise observed last year which saw an increase to 19% from 16%. Similar to previous years, the majority of staff are in the main age groups 35-44 at 16% and 45-54 at 18%. The Group's age profile means overall there is a good balance in the proportional representation between the main age groups. There is also the observation that the College is attracting and retaining those who will form part of the future talent pipeline.

Students

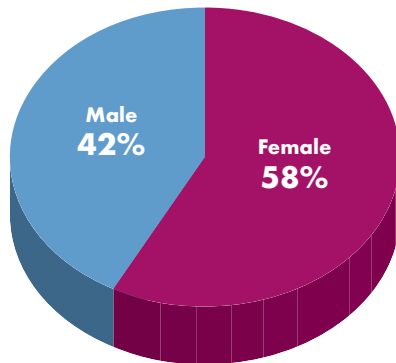
The age ratio for the two student cohorts retains a similar pattern to the previous academic years, with the growth in enrolments continuing in the 19+ age group.

Actions

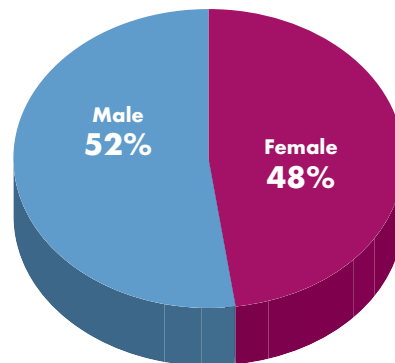
The HR Organisational Strategy contains planned interventions that support succession planning and the use of HR monitoring data to help anticipate the implications of the age profile for key posts. The creation of the Investors in People action plan also references the management of the talent pipeline with the introduction of a Succession Planning Working Group, a Learning and Development strategy to ensure appropriate training opportunities and the revision of the PDR process. This will allow UCG to future proof the Group in terms of talent, experience and knowledge retention.

GENDER

Employees



Students



Employees

The Group has a ratio of 58% female and 42% male staff – a slight fluctuation that is in line with the previous years. The FE college norm is for 62% female employees. It is noted that the percentage split witnessed at the EMT level is reversed at the SLT level with the ratio being 40:60.

Students

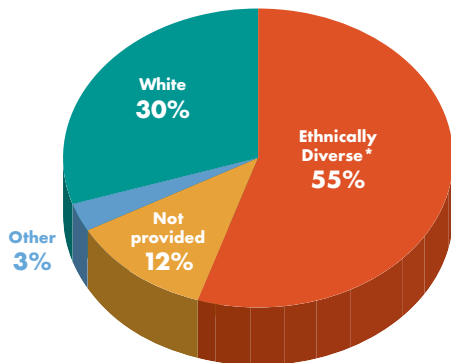
The gender balance of 52:48 in favour of males remains consistent with the previous academic year.

Actions

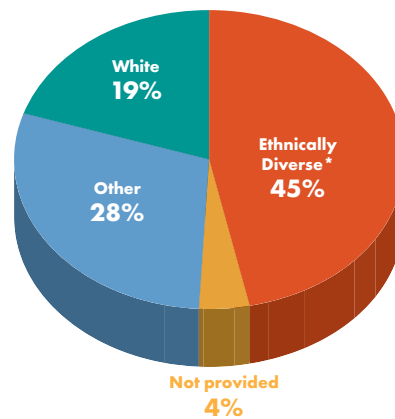
The commitment to improve the recruitment and promotional opportunities for female staff is an expressed action in the Group's Strategic Equality Objectives 2020-24, and work undertaken to review the stages of the Recruitment & Selection process will help to improve the representation of female staff at the SLT level.

ETHNICITY

Employees



Students



* Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

Employees

The total number of staff from an Ethnically Diverse (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) background remains at 55% and is higher than the London average (41%) and considerably higher than the national average of (9%) for the sector as reported by the Education and Training Foundation. Within the context of these figures the overall number of staff from an Ethnically Diverse background is excellent.

Further analysis shows the level of representation for staff from an Ethnically Diverse background at the academic level has increased by another 2% to 54% with a small drop in support roles by 2% to 57%. Both levels of representation are in line with the overall Ethnically Diverse figures for the Group, which is extremely positive. The picture reflected at the Extended Management Team (EMT) level remains the same as last year, with the level of representation of staff from an Ethnically Diverse background at 48%. This figure exceeds the Key Performance Indicator set for 2024 of 40% of managers from an Ethnically Diverse background and is evidence of the impact of the long-term commitment to an integrated strategic and operational approach with initiatives such as:

- Advertising on non-traditional media platforms such as the Black Leadership Group Recruitment Portal
- Bespoke training for Recruiting Managers
- Coaching for Ethnically Diverse background Staff

These measure alongside others continue to successfully improve & maintain the recruitment levels and promotional opportunities for Ethnically Diverse staff to be represented at the managerial level.

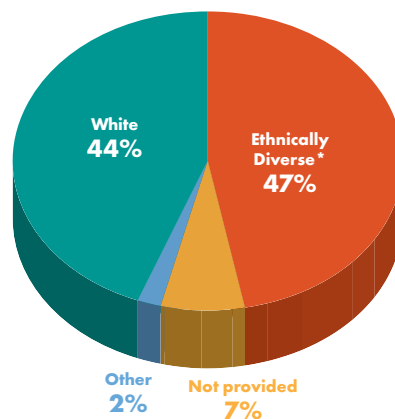
Like many organisations the challenge remains for UCG to significantly increase at the highest managerial level within the Group the proportion of staff from an Ethnically Diverse background which stands at 10% for SLT.

Students

The proportion of students from a BAME background (Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic) is at 45% is consistent with last year. The curriculum areas and respective centres are aware of their student profile and in line with Group procedures take steps to ensure best practice is followed at enrolment.

ETHNICITY

Extended Management Team



* Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

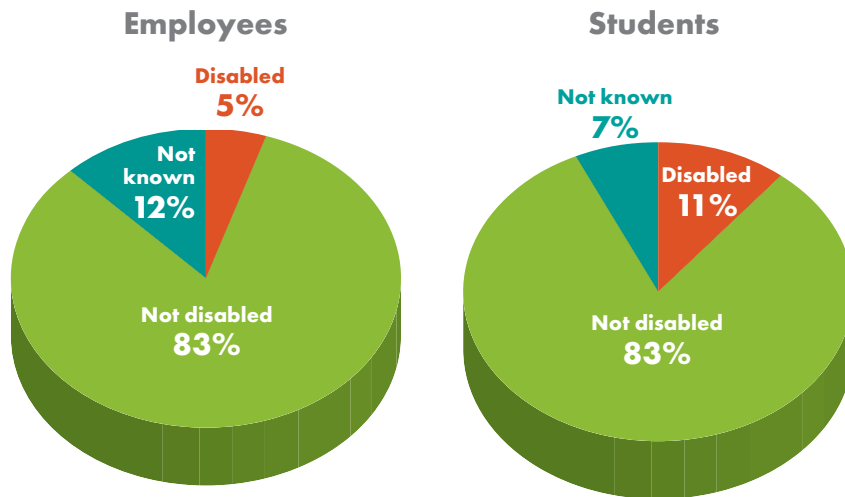
Actions

The commitment to improve the recruitment and promotional opportunities for staff who are underrepresented so as to ensure a diverse staff mix at every level in the organisation remains a key objective in the HR Organisational Development Strategy.

Key initiatives include to:

- As part of the “Grow our own” programme monitor the diversity profile of staff selected for the ILM Accredited Management Development Programmes such as Aspiring Managers and Achieving Results Through People and to use these as Positive Action opportunities for Women and for those from an Ethnically Diverse (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Background.
- Further promote internal mentoring programme to support the career development of staff such as those from an Ethnically Diverse background who are under-represented at the highest managerial level in UCG alongside a buddy system.
- Develop steps to encourage the improvement of the disclosure of ethnicity and disability at recruitment and during employment.
- Monitor the diversity profile of staff for internal promotions and secondments.
- Encourage and support staff participation in the AOC’s Aspiring Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Leaders Coaching programme and Women into Management workshops.
- Support internal applicants going for a promotion or secondment through the introduction of a post coaching session with their manager. From this further career development opportunities are identified and supported by UCG, such as the Black Women’s Leadership Course from the AOC. This innovative approach provides not only valuable support to help retain existing staff it also acts as a pathway to gain feedback on any potential barriers (perceived or actual) to the recruitment and selection process of the previous academic year.

DISABILITY



Employees

The current overall proportion of employees declaring a disability is 5%, similar to last year's figure. The level of disclosure is in line with the norm for the FE sector (6%) and above the 3% for the general UK workforce. It is, however, lower than the 18% cited by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit for the level of disability amongst those who are employed. The level of 'not known/blank' for the Group has increased slightly to 12% from 9%, while this is higher than the 4% average for the FE sector it is considerably below the 23% for the general working population.

Students

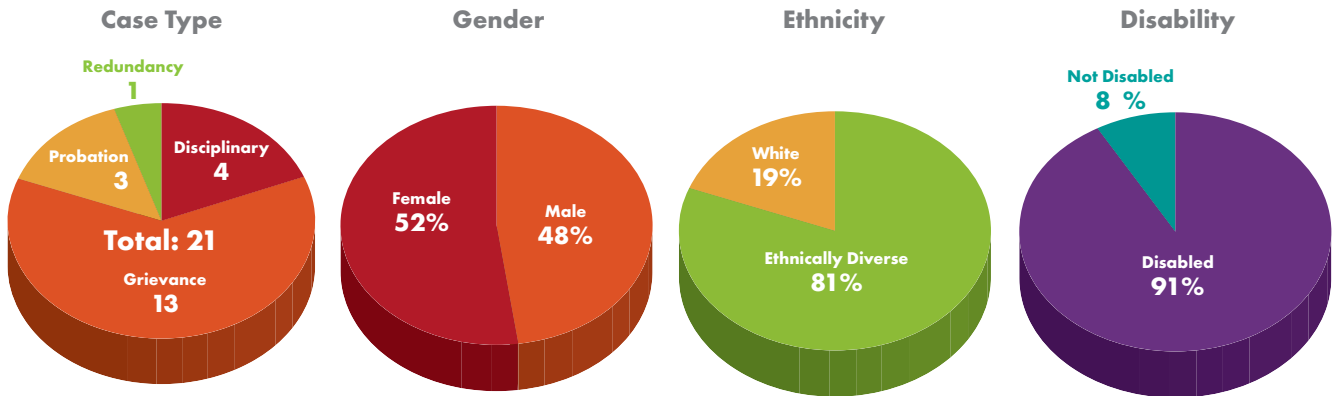
The data for students with a language and learning difficulty at 82% shows no significant percentages change from the previous academic year. Across the Group there remains a strong commitment to supporting students with a language and/or a learning difficulty.

Actions

In line with the core actions for being granted Level 2 of the 'Disability Confident Committed' Employer award, the College continues to:

- Take steps to encourage the disclosure of protected characteristics at the recruitment stage and during employment and to monitor the impact
- Encourage staff to disclose their disability by promoting the benefits of disclosure and the support available as a result.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS CASEWORK



Employees

An examination of the data indicates a gender profile split 52% female and 48% male. Against the Group profile of 58% female and 42% male, the data shows a slight imbalance in the over representation of females in casework. This feature reverses the pattern of last year and reflects the long-term norm where there has been a more balanced gender representation.

Of the 21 cases, 8 staff (9%) staff declared they had a disability up 3% from last year and above the Group figure of 5%. One possible explanation could be that when staff are referred to the Occupational Health provider, the OH Clinician will state that in their opinion the employee does fall within the definition of having a disability under the Equality Act 2010.

Within the context of the strategic equality objective, the HR Team will be ensuring that this information is updated over the coming months and as part of an exercise to increase the details on protected characteristics steps will be taken to encourage staff to declare their disability. The intention is that this will provide a more accurate recording of the overall statistic on the Disability profile across UCG and the figures for caseload will in turn provide a more balanced outcome.

Case load data shows that the number of cases that involve staff from an Ethnic Diverse background is at 81% significantly higher than the Group profile of 55% and up by 30% on last year's figure. It should be noted that the figures shared reverse the pattern of the last three years where the norm has been for the number of cases brought against Ethnically Diverse staff to be lower than their Group profile.

Actions:

- HR will continue to closely monitor the diversity data around casework to determine if any potential patterns or trends emerge in regard to Females and those staff from an Ethnically Diverse background.
- Ensure the continued exercise of checking for the disclosure of protected characteristics such as having a Disability and encouraging staff to update individual personal records to ensure the overall figures for the Group are more in line with the level of declarations.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARIES

Each College records the complaints received from students and also the disciplinarys and exclusions. The analysis of both areas include the diversity of students in regard to age, ethnicity, gender profile and disability. Data for 2023-24 shows that there is no disproportionate representation in the level of complaints made or disciplinarys carried out in relation to UCG's student diversity profile.

The largest single group excluded were Any other Black/African/Caribbean background with 8 students excluded in 2023-24, compared to 6 in 2022-2023. It should be noted that this level of exclusion reflects just 0.17% of those learners from an ethnically diverse background and as part of the Quality Assurance process, steps are taken to identify any underlying causes or contributory factors that may be linked to these exclusions.

** and 3 in 2021-2022. This steady increase over the past three years suggests that students from this background may be disproportionately impacted by behavioural issues or underlying socio-economic challenges.



RECRUITMENT

As an inner London College, UCG is proud of its diverse and multi-skilled workforce. It continues to aspire to have a workforce that is more representative of all sections of society at all levels in the organisation. The range of perspectives and experience diversity brings is an asset to our organisation and we want to create an inclusive, welcoming environment for students and employees.

UCG takes active steps to ensure that opportunities are open to all. All job applications are treated equally, regardless of age, disability, gender identity or gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic.

UCG continues to develop the reporting capacity which will allow further detailed analysis and monitoring by all the protected characteristics for roles applied for, types of employment contracts, success levels by diversity in regard to being shortlisted and appointed to, while being able to provide such information for internal promotions and secondments.

GENDER PAY GAP

	2023-24
Mean Gender Pay Gap	7%
Median Gender Pay Gap	5%
Median Bonus Gender Pay Gap	0.0%

• **Mean gender pay gap:**

The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.

• **Median gender pay gap:**

The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees.

• **Median bonus gap:**

The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male relevant employees and that paid to female relevant employees.

Since 2017, UK organisations with 250 or more employees, have a legal duty to publicly report the differences between the average earnings of men and women in the organisation and to provide a “snapshot” as of 31st March of each year.

The gender pay gap is calculated as the percentage difference between the two rates; a positive percentage indicates that men receive a higher hourly rate than women whilst a negative percentage indicates that women receive a higher hourly rate compared to their male colleagues.

In summary the gender pay gaps shows a positive picture with the:

- Gender pay gap for the Group reduced to 7% from 8.74 % in favour of men. This reflects the trend reported by the Office for National Statistics where the gender pay gap has been slowly declining over time.
- The median gender pay gap for the Group has also reduced slightly to 5 % from 5.7 % in favour of men. The results are very positive particularly when compared to the UK national median pay gap for men and women is an average of 15.4% and the national average for the education sector of 10.3%.

Actions

The results of the Gender Pay analysis will be used to create a Group wide action plan to address any pay inequalities that cannot be explained or justified by contract type and or occupation categories. Some key actions include:

- UCG remains committed to paying the London Living Wage to all staff and ensuring that staff employed by external contractors also pay this.
- Undertake further analysis of the pay gap in regard to Race and Equal Pay.
- Review of pay structures to simplify our approach and, where possible, align the pay rates across the different colleges.
- Where differences relate to terms and conditions a phased approach to be taken to review terms and to adopt a consistent approach across the Group.
- Continue to review the existing Pay Policy to ensure that they are fairly and consistently applied across the Group.



04

NEXT STEPS

The future areas for focus in 2024-25 are to :

- Implement the Strategic EDI Objectives and Action Plan 2024-25 so that the Group can continue to strengthen and exceed the aims of the General Duty.
- Build upon our strength of embedding equality, diversity and inclusion as recognised by the SAR Report 2023-4 :

“Leaders and managers place diversity and inclusion at the heart of the college and the impact of this can be seen through the welcoming environments, resources developed and staff and students’ promotion of equality”.

- Continue to benchmark the progress on equality, diversity and inclusion through external recognition by prestigious organisations such as the Investors in Diversity Award.