

Access and Participation Plan Variations Summary 2024/25

Summary

1.1 What is an Access and Participation Plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education. The London School of Architecture's full 2022-2025 can be seen [here](#).

1.2 Key Points

London School of Architecture (LSA) is a specialist higher education provider delivering Part 2 of architectural education, which allows students to graduate with a full Masters of Architecture qualification. LSA offers a professional network model of education, which means that students undertake a placement in their first year of study with a member of our 'Practice Network' (all RIBA Chartered employers in London). We currently work with nearly 200 London-based practices, who support our students through placements and other professional opportunities.

LSA is committed to equality of opportunity for all learners to participate and succeed at the institution, regardless of background. We support and facilitate access and success for all learners who meet admissions criteria, doing so in ways that promote equality and overcome potential barriers caused by disadvantage. We have looked at our performance data for students from different backgrounds and have found areas where we need to improve. We are pleased to have no issues in our students' continuation, attainment (those achieving a 1st or 2:1 degree) or progression (employment or post-graduate study) outcomes. Our Access and Participation Plan focuses on improving access (enrolment), for mature (21 and over) learners who are from areas of the country where participation in higher education is low (postcode data is used to assess this); and, Black, Asian and minority ethnic students.

We have identified targets we would like to achieve for each group. Details are on page 10 of our full Access and Participation Plan. Our strategic measures focus on widening access by delivering an outreach programme and developing our collaboration and partnerships.

1.3 Fees we charge

Our maximum fees are set at £9,000 per year for our UK full-time Part 2 Degree courses. Full fee information is available [here](#).

1.4 Financial help available

LSA provides an annual bursary of £1,000 per year for learners whose household income is below £16,000 and who are from areas of the country where adult participation in higher education is lowest. We also have a fund that students can apply for in instances of financial hardship. Full eligibility

and terms and conditions can be found [here](#). We have also provided two fees bursaries for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, (Stephen Lawrence Day Foundation Bursaries); and, three Zaha Hadid Foundation Bursaries that cover full fees and significant maintenance costs to low income students classed as Independent or Young Independent learners.

1.5 Information for students

LSA is committed to publishing clear, accurate, timely and accessible information about our courses, application process, student funding and support through our website. We provide information for prospective students, applicants and offer holders through online and in-person events, and via telephone and email. If a student is offered a place to study at the LSA, information on fees for the duration of the course, and any awarded financial support is included in the offer letter, as well as details on the bursary scheme and how to apply.

1.6 What we are aiming to achieve?

LSA has two charitable objectives: to widen access and participation in careers in the built environment, and to deploy design as transformative for more sustainable lives. We aim to:

- address the most urgent issues for those delivering higher education in architecture, pro-actively addressing the soft and hard barriers to the profession and industry, taking a core focus on diversifying participation.
- ensure career readiness and affordability of study through a 12-month work placement within our Practice Network. Students can earn a minimum of £12,000 whilst studying.
- use a teaching and learning model that supports access and participation by focusing on work-based learning and mentoring for students throughout study.
- increase enrolments from mature learners who are from areas of the country where participation in higher education is low, to 18% of our total students by 2024-25.
- increase enrolments from Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, to 30% by 2024-25.

We have identified seven programmes of activity to support achievement of our aims and targets.

1.7 What are we doing to achieve our aims?

Implementation of a progressive outreach programme

- As we only currently offer Part 2 architectural education, we are focused on reaching mature learners. This activity includes work with colleges and communities to reach potential mature learners, and those looking to come back into education. We are improving communications such as social media and promotional campaigns and developing content that promotes inclusive entry and opportunity. We are working with our Practice Network, and other relevant organisations such as local authorities, to reach potential students from underrepresented groups who have completed their Part 1 and are now in the workplace. We also work with Part 1 providers to offer pathways.

- We work with other organisations and the third sector (e.g. Social Mobility Foundation, Into University, UniConnect) to provide activities with our LSA and to our Practice Network, and engagement with our students and ambassadors.
- We work with schools to support Aspiration, Awareness, Access, Affordability and Achievement. Architecture is not in school curriculum, which means its visibility is limited. Awareness raising that starts early and can influence at key decision points is required. Architecture is also a competitive discipline. It is important that target groups build the necessary skills to continue educational pathways and enter the profession. Supporting achievement in school curriculum areas aligned to the skills required for pathways in architecture is therefore a focus from 2022-23 onwards, working in collaboration with schools to develop attainment-focused activity.

Development of targeted collaboration and partnerships

- Target up to 5 schools / colleges for collaboration and develop effective partnerships which focus on teaching, curriculum and leadership as key areas for collaboration.
- Develop links between school teachers and LSA's academic staff, who can learn from one another and support school curriculum in areas linked to our specialism.
- Explore partnerships with other organisations that support social mobility and access to higher education, including the City Hall Regeneration Team, the UniConnect partnerships, IntoUniversity, the Brilliant Club and Brightside.
- Develop our employer partnerships to contribute to our outreach programme.

New academic programme to widen access

- We are collaborating with the Local Authority to consider piloting a Level 4/Level 5 Higher Apprenticeship oriented towards retrofit and green skills. This helps to lay the groundwork for degree apprenticeship in the future.

Positive transition and ongoing student success

- Fair and contextual admissions processes, which means that we will consider students' broader skills and experiences and backgrounds for entry rather than just grades.
- Supporting students as they enter LSA, helping with settling in, understanding expectations and creating a positive, confident community.
- Supporting student wellbeing and development.
- Developing an inclusive curriculum which includes a range of learner perspectives.

Integrated employability outcomes

- LSA's Practice Network provides work-based learning and mentoring for students throughout their studies. The costs of study are offset by the

salary students earn during their first year from an integrated 12-month work placement.

Improving data, monitoring and evaluation

- We will develop our data and evaluation to better understand our performance and the experiences of our students. Student feedback will help improve our practices.

Increasing our understanding

- We are developing our understanding of our activities and improving our work. We share learning internally, with our Practice Network and the higher education sector.

1.8 How can students get involved?

Our Access and Participation plan was developed and written in collaboration with our students. At LSA, engaging and consulting with students occurs as a matter of normal practice on daily bases. Student collaboration as a 'normal' operating environment for the LSA comes from our establishment, where students were key influencers and codevelopers of our first years of operation. More formally, student representatives sit on both LSA's Course Forum and the Senate. Students can get involved through a range of consultation events and by providing feedback to student representatives. The LSA and its students also work collaboratively in planning, delivery and evaluation of outreach work. For example, the LSA work in schools has been co-designed and delivered by student ambassadors. More broadly, the LSA's annual student survey and focus groups provide opportunities for students to provide additional feedback on courses, programmes and services.

1.9 Evaluation - how will we measure what we have achieved?

We use a 'theory of change' model to evaluate specific initiatives, which helps us to identify how our activity works and how we can measure it. Our evaluation includes surveys, qualitative data collection from participant interviews and focus groups, other stakeholder interviews (e.g. teachers, parents) and staff and student ambassador reflections. Our approach to evaluating student success and progression activities includes monitoring assessment outcomes and reflecting on student evaluation data. We evaluate our programme design and whether our activities are having our intended impact. We make sure our findings are considered when we are improving our practice and developing our work.

We are supported in evaluation by external specialists through our membership of Specialist Evidence Evaluation and Research (SEER), who also conduct research and evaluation on our behalf. Our evaluation strategy is detailed on pages 29-32 of our full Access and Participation Plan.

1.10 Contact details for further information

For further information about our Access and Participation Plan or activities, you can contact Dr Neal Shasore, Head of School/Chief Executive, at neal@the-lsa.org.