



UNIVERSITY ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT April 2017

Introduction

- 1 The University of London is committed to making its high quality and flexible programmes accessible to all students who have the capacity to benefit from them, and this Access and Participation Statement has been prepared in connection with the UK Government's Teaching Excellence Framework. Currently, the Framework covers the national delivery of undergraduate education, so this Statement focuses mainly on the work of the University of London International Academy in the UK, but it does also cover postgraduate education carried out by the School of Advanced Study (SAS) and the University of London Institute in Paris (ULIP) to demonstrate how the University is able to offer the benefits of a higher education to a wide variety of groups and individuals who might otherwise have been excluded because of their life circumstances.

Context

The University of London

- 2 The University of London was founded by Royal Charter in 1836 for the public benefit; and its mission has always been to promote education and knowledge. From its establishment, the University's degrees have been awarded regardless of race, creed or political belief. In 1858, the University opened its degrees to any (male) student, regardless of their location; and then in 1878 London became the first university in the UK to admit women to its degrees.
- 3 As a federal institution, the University of London comprises 18 self-governing member institutions, all of which are autonomous and have their own access and participation strategies.
- 4 The University also has three Central Academic Bodies, viz:
 - SAS which delivers postgraduate education, research and support for research in the humanities;
 - ULIP which delivers undergraduate and postgraduate education in collaboration with its principal partner Queen Mary University of London (QMUL), as well as a number of member institutions of the University, but outwith the UK contributing to the University's international engagement into Europe; and
 - The University of London International Academy which, again in collaboration with member institutions, delivers undergraduate and postgraduate education in the UK and worldwide through the University's International Programmes.

Principles of the University's Commitment to Accessible and High Quality Academic Provision

Accessibility to All

- 5 SAS is firmly committed to promoting equal opportunity and, in respect of student recruitment and admissions, the only consideration is that the individual meets, or is likely to meet, the requirements of the programme. 40% of SAS students declare their ethnicity as non-white. The gender split of SAS students is 59% female and 41% male.
- 6 SAS ensures that its staff operate inclusive learning and teaching practices. It has adapted learning plans for all types of student disability and can, where appropriate, incorporate multisensory methods of delivery which increases engagement across the whole student body. 4% of the School's students have declared a disability and are receiving support.
- 7 International Programmes continues to design and offer innovative programmes of study, an example being the Global MBA in collaboration with QMUL. The award has been designed specifically for working students who can progress at their own pace and, therefore, fit their studies around existing commitments.
- 8 ULIP is dedicated to promoting cultural understanding and to offer students the chance to gain invaluable international experience, an example being the MA Urban History and Culture programme as well as its summer courses (International Relations and Global Cities) in collaboration with QMUL. With the programmes' split-site location, students have the opportunity to discover and study two great world cities – Paris and London - promoting not only mobility but also the exchange of people, knowledge and ideas.

Flexibility of Modes of Study

- 9 The commitment of International Programmes to flexible learning means that learners can study for programmes either at a recognised teaching institution or by distance learning. They can move between the two and not only choose their own pace of study (as is possible at many UK institutions) but also construct a package of support which is specifically tailored to their own needs. For example, the BSc International Development can take up to eight years of study. Students who do not wish to commit to the full BSc can study individual courses and can normally transfer the credits from completed modules towards a related degree. Students who want more support can secure that from a teaching institution, from the University's own London study sessions, or in a wide variety of other ways.
- 10 International Programmes continues to develop its network of examination centres, so that the flexibility and convenience offered to students as they study is matched, as far as possible, in the exam process. There are now some 600 examination centres available in the UK and worldwide.
- 11 SAS has a mixed portfolio of delivery – distance learning, blended learning, and some programmes with limited tutor/student contact (eg one full day of teaching per week) which are attractive to those with, for example, carer responsibilities or travel difficulties.

Research Excellence

- 12 SAS unites nine internationally renowned Institutes in the humanities, broadly defined. It is an established and significant component of the research support infrastructure for humanities in the UK whose fundamental purpose is to maintain and develop its Institutes' and central academic activities' resources for the benefit of the national and international research communities.
- 13 The research promotion and facilitation activity provided by SAS would be diminished without the high-quality research-active academics and visiting academics who contribute to the rich intellectual environment of the School. Its teaching activity, which is entirely postgraduate, is also enhanced by the research promotion and facilitation activity it undertakes, particularly the significant portfolio of research training it makes available for its own students and, additionally, for those from around the country. It offers niche MA and MRes programmes acting as seed beds to PhD study.

Partnership Models of Working

- 14 From its foundation, the University has regularly worked in partnership with like-minded organisations to create new educational opportunities. For example, the national and international network of teaching institutions recognised to teach the University's International Programmes, or the networks, collaborations and fellowships fostered by SAS and ULIP.
- 15 SAS nurtures a national, resource-rich space for discussions preparatory to collaborative research bids and the establishment of formal networks of researchers on particular themes focused on regular seminar meetings and conferences.
- 16 One of SAS's Institutes, the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, formed a collaboration with the Africa Justice Foundation and offered places to a number of students from Rwanda to come to London to study on a partial fees basis.
- 17 ULIP and QMUL are working in partnership to launch a new suite of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, beginning in 2017-18 with new Minors in Business and in International Relations for ULIP's existing BA in French Studies, as well as a new co-taught MA in Urban History and Culture.

Public Engagement

- 18 SAS is a signatory of the NCCPE's Manifesto for Public Engagement. As such it recognises a responsibility to contribute to society through public engagement, to learning from and evaluating this process and to allowing staff, students and fellows to benefit from public engagement by gaining new perspectives and insights on their work.
- 19 ULIP offers free to attend seminar series, in collaboration with a number of partners, on '*Challenging Europe*' (a politics seminar series) and '*the Politics of Translation, Translation of Cultures*' (a humanities seminar series).

Lifelong Study

- 20 In the International Programmes' portfolio UK-based students are often older, studying alongside work or parental responsibilities, and may be returning to HE-level study, and in SAS, 50% of students are aged over 40.
- 21 SAS offers a range of employment and skills development online and face-to-face, including research skills aligned to the Vitae researcher development framework necessary for careers in academia and elsewhere.

Technological Support and Solutions to Enable Different Modes of Study

- 22 International Programmes offers, in collaboration with Coursera, a series of award-winning programmes through MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) and these have now attracted more than one million students.

Transparency and Accessibility of all Information for Students

- 23 The University already meets a high standard of transparency by publishing detailed Student Information and Performance Statistics online.
- 24 The International Programmes Teaching Institutions Recognition Framework was established in 2009 and updated in 2013. The framework is used (*inter alia*) to:
 - a) provide students with information and guidance about the choice of institutions offering tuition support for University programmes;
 - b) provide confidence in the provision offered by recognised centres;
 - c) protect the interests of students studying at recognised centres;
 - d) create strong links between institutions; and
 - e) continually enhance the sharing of good practice.
- 25 SAS participates annually in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and bi-ennially in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). It uses the survey results to enhance the student experience.

Examples

- 26 Below are just a few examples to demonstrate the University's commitment to providing a flexible and high quality offering to students irrespective of personal or social circumstances.
 - a) A current Royal Marine Commando is studying the University of London LLB. The University's flexible approach to delivery allows him to study when deployed on active service, and to overcome previous unsuccessful HE study experiences.

- b) A Jersey resident chose the University because she could study whilst working and continue to live with her parents on the island. The high cost of on-campus living would otherwise have made higher education inaccessible to her.
- c) The International Foundation Programme and CertHE programmes in Law, Computing and Social Sciences are designed to support HE entry for those without conventional Level 3 qualifications and are taught by an increasing network of UK and international teaching centres.
- d) The Warburg Institute offer student bursaries for students experiencing hardship and funded by the American Friends of the Warburg Institute, the Saxl Fund and the Warburg Charitable Trust.

Summary

- 27 As can be seen the variety and flexibility of course provision offered by the University opens up opportunities and access to higher education to an ever-increasing diverse range of individuals and groups who might otherwise have been excluded because of their life circumstances.