

Spurgeon's College

Summary of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plan

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.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Spurgeon's College at <https://www.spurgeons.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plan/>.

Key points

Spurgeon's College is a confessional Higher Education Provider (HEP), and our core activity is training men and women for Christian mission, ministry and leadership in the contemporary world. We continue to prepare candidates for ordination to Baptist ministry within the Baptist Union of Great Britain (BUGB). The College also trains pastors from other denominations and those called to Pioneer Ministry and Missional work in its ministerial formation programmes. The current Access and Participation Plan (APP) has a focus to improve both access and outcomes for underrepresented students especially students from the following underrepresented groups:

- Students from low participation neighbourhoods
- Students from low-income areas
- Black students

Fees

At Spurgeon's College, the maximum fees charged are:

- First Degree: £7980 for full-time students (£9073 including ministerial training fee).
- First Degree: £3990 for part-time students (£5083 including ministerial training fee).

Please note that the above fees are for the academic year 2022-23 and may increase in subsequent years. The College follows the higher education sector recommendations on fee increases. This means that any future fee increases would be in line with UK inflation.

You can see a full list of fees for courses at Spurgeon's College at <https://www.spurgeons.ac.uk/finances/>

Financial help available

The College offers a range of financial support to students, especially students from underrepresented groups to assist in accessing higher education and continue with their studies to complete their course. This support includes:

- An APP targeted bursary, or fee waiver, for qualifying underrepresented students (Students with household residual incomes up to £25,000). An award of up to £1000 may be given to a student in each year of their undergraduate higher education programme or pathway.
- Privately funded bursaries from trusts or individuals.
See pages 19 and 20 of the full APP.

Information for students

- Prospective students receive information on financial support and fees at open days, on our website and in offer letters.
- Current students receive information on financial support available and fees through our website and our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Up-to-date information is available on the College website <https://www.spurgeons.ac.uk/>

See page 25 of the full APP.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our assessment of performance has revealed that the College is performing better than average for the higher education sector or that it does not differ appreciably from that of the sector across the majority of reference points. The College, however, has identified key areas where its performance needs to improve. The College's APP has identified the aims, designed to address those areas where there is room for improvement.

- **Improve access for entrants from low participation neighbourhoods.** The College is a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and is leading in a project exploring how ministerial education can be funded in the 21st century. One key outcome of this project may be addressing the financial ability of university access for students from low participation neighbourhoods. The objective of addressing the gap in recruitment for students from low participation neighbourhoods will take time to resolve but our goal is to see significant improvement by 2024-25.
- **Reduce the gap in upper degree classification for graduates from low-income areas.** Internal research has identified that there is a relationship between successful outcomes and financial pressures faced by students. The College will continue to carefully analyse how targeted financial support may be used to improve successful student outcomes, while ensuring grade inflation does not occur. Our goal is to see significant improvement by 2024-25.
- **Significantly reduce the gap in upper degree classification for 'Black' graduates.** The College believes that a number of practical issues in addressing this attainment gap for 'Black' students can be targeted through strengthening the College's provision in its Learning Support. The College has already taken measures to strengthen our academic support to all students and study skills are a compulsory component for all new level 4 students regardless of background. Our goal is to significantly address this gap in performance by 2024-25.

See pages 13-16 of the full APP.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

The College has identified the following eight measures to support achievement of our aims:

1. **Increase the provision of targeted bursaries and scholarships-** this supports students from underrepresented groups to access and complete their course at the College.
2. **Open a regional academic centre in partnership with a global partner-** this will improve access for entrants from low participation neighbourhoods.
3. **Increased marketing-** advertising that eligible students will be able to apply for a student loan that covers their full tuition fees from the student loans company (SLC) may act as a mitigating factor in attracting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.
4. **Promotion of level 3 educational provision in targeted areas-** this will encourage students into higher education as the College promotes courses within disadvantaged communities.
5. **Introduction of a summer school-** this measure in combination with measures 6, 7 & 8, will assist in closing the 'success' attainment gap.

6. **The use of Panopto-** this will support students under significant time pressures, i.e., students will be able to access a specific section of a lecture rather than re-watching the entire lecture. It's also likely to be of value to students for whom English is an additional language.
7. **Enhanced Learning Support-** this will assist students to succeed and improve the quality of service to students.
8. **Enhanced Study Skills-** this will directly target the practical issues identified as being major contributors to the attainment gap.

See pages 19- 22 of the full APP.

As a variation to our plan, we aim to improve access to further & higher education for entrants from underrepresented groups (URG's) within the local and surrounding areas by developing partnerships with local schools & organisations to deliver attainment raising activities.

How students can get involved

Students have played a significant role in discussing the College's performance and in articulating the strategic aims and objectives of the APP. Students are represented on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Group and are involved in the evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of the College's APP.

- Students can contact the student representatives to provide feedback at studentreps@teneor.spurgeons.ac.uk.
- If students would like to get involved in this work, they can contact the APP Worker at app@spurgeons.ac.uk.

See pages 22 and 23 of the full APP.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

The College believes that its evaluation strategy is robust for an institution of its size and has the capability to evaluate the implementation of its plan. The evaluation of individual activities and financial support packages will be undertaken primarily by the College's Access and Participation Plan Monitoring Group (APPMG), the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Monitoring Group and the Board of Governors. The APPMG will provide an annual monitoring and evaluation report that will be examined by the Principal and Heads of Departments. It will focus on two tasks:

- (i) The provision of empirical evidence on which the senior management and Board can evaluate whether the College is on track to meet its stated targets, ambitions, and goals.
- (ii) An evaluation of the measures being used to support the College's access and participation goals.

See pages 23 and 24 of the full APP.

Contact details for further information

Please contact our Access and Participation Plan Worker at app@spurgeons.ac.uk for further information.