**UCL Estates**

**Inclusive Design Strategy**

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**Inclusive Design Strategy**

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1. **Introduction**

University College London (UCL) has a proud history of being the first university in England to be open to all, irrespective of race or religion, and the first to admit women on an equal basis. In this regard, UCL recognises that people are different in their needs and in the way they use the built environment and that these differences should be accommodated through informed and thoughtful design.

Inclusively designed buildings are designed, built and maintained in a way that allows everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, to take their equal place in life. A good design meets the needs of the widest possible population and should look to remove physical barriers to services and the built environment that create segregation and exclusion.

Inclusive design is not simply about the planning or building control requirements or about the Equalities Act 2010; for UCL, it is about providing a world class university whose buildings allow everyone to thrive and concentrate on their role rather than being segregated or excluded from university life. The UCL estate should operate to support and not hinder access to buildings and public spaces.

UCL is committed to improving the accessibility of its estate; the forthcoming Estates Strategy[[1]](#footnote-1) sets out one of its key principles as, ‘Accessible to all - committing to accessible facilities across the estate; providing open and permeable campuses with an inviting public realm, which show UCL to be a good neighbour and sensitive to its local communities’. This principle of the Estates Strategy supports the UCL 2034 principal theme of ‘An accessible, publicly engaged organisation that fosters a lifelong community’. The other UCL 2034 key enablers which are most pertinent to this strategy are:

1. Giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities

2. Valuing our staff and delivering on equality and diversity

This Strategy sets out UCL Estates’ approach to inclusive design and its commitment to take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure the environment at UCL is both inclusive and accessible. It provides guidance to UCL’s staff, consultants and contractors on the inclusive design goals which UCL Estates seeks to achieve across its estate, whilst at the same time influencing education within the built environment.

**Strategic Principles**

The strategic principles of our inclusive environment are that:

* Buildings and spaces should be easily used by as many people as possible without undue effort, special treatment or separation.
* The estate should be able to offer people the freedom to choose how they access and participate equally in all of the College’s activities.
* The estate should value and support diversity and difference.
* The estate should offer a high quality environment that is safe to use and ensures safe egress even in an emergency.

These principles apply to all UCL buildings, spaces and services – existing, refurbished and new build - and reflect UCL’s commitment to access and inclusion. All estates work will be expected to achieve compliance with Approved Document M and with BS8300. Inclusive Design standards will be drawn up to reflect UCL's expectation in each area where these go beyond those requirements.

1. **Legislative background**

**2.1 The Equality Act (EA2010)**

The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics that are covered by the act. These are:

* Age,
* Disability,
* Gender reassignment,
* Marriage and civil partnership,
* Pregnancy and maternity,
* Race,
* Religion or belief,
* Sex,
* Sexual orientation

All decisions made by the University should consider the impact of the decision on these groups. The Equality Act 2010 requires service providers and employers must:

* Not give someone a service of worse quality or in a worse way than you would usually provide the service, or give a service with worse terms.
* Ensure reasonable adjustments are made to remove barriers for disabled people.
* Not discriminate, harass or victimise prospective, current or former staff and students.

Under the Act service providers should not wait until a request is made to alter the built environment they occupy but should take a proactive approach to improving accessibility. UCL should, therefore, be seeking to improve access and inclusion with each and every opportunity. The Act requires all service providers to have due regard to equality when making decisions about the future and tackle the consequences of decisions made in the past which failed to give this due regard. This is best approached by consultation and analysis to work towards closing any gaps in service, so that disabled and non-disabled people express the same level of satisfaction with their accommodation or obtain a more equal pattern of educational achievement.

**2.2 The London Plan**

The London Plan is the spatial development strategy for London. It sets out an economic, environmental, transport and social framework for development within London.

Policy D5 Inclusive Design (December 2019 version)

This Policy is similar to the previous London Plan Policy 7.2. Like its predecessor it requires development proposals to ‘be able to be entered, used and exited safely, easily and with dignity for all’. The London Plan requires that places and spaces are ‘convenient and welcoming with no disabling barriers, providing independent access without additional undue effort, separation or special treatment’. The London Plan references BS8300 volumes 1 and 2 as guidance on how to implement inclusive design.

The London Plan policy D5 also focuses on the importance of being able to not only enter a building but also to exit it in safety, easily and with dignity for all. The Plan requires buildings to ‘incorporate safe and dignified emergency access for all building users’. At least one lift per core should be a suitably sized fire evacuation lift to facilitate step free egress.

1. **Where are we now?**

Diversity at UCL by numbers (as of October 2018)[[2]](#footnote-2)

**3.1 All Staff Statistics**

Number & percentage of women – 7003 = 52.95%

Number & percentage of men – 6223 = 47.05%

Number & percentage of under 25's – 304 = 2.30%

Number & percentage of over 65's – 468 = 3.54%

Number & percentage of people with disabilities – 509 = 3.85%

Number & percentage of staff from a minority ethnic group at UCL – 2524 = 19.08%

Number & percentage of non UK nationals at UCL – 4431 = 33.50%

**3.2 Student statistics (2018-2019)**

Number & percentage of women – 24935 = 59%

Number & percentage of men – 17165 = 41%

Number & percentage of people with disabilities – 3300 = 7.8%

Number & percentage of non UK nationals at UCL – 19440 = 46%

Currently there is not a clear picture of the accessibility of the built environment at UCL. Some information is provided by the Accessable guides[[3]](#footnote-3) and there are some access audits of buildings. KPI’s need to be developed to measure the accessibility of the estate. KPI’s will give a quantitative idea of the progress that is being made but should not be the sole way of viewing how well the strategic principles are being achieved. Suggested KPI’s for commencing with could include;

1. The percentage of lecture theatres with at least one wheelchair accessible viewing position.
2. The percentage of lecture theatres with an induction loop.
3. The percentage of buildings with step free access.
4. The percentage of buildings offering male, female, gender neutral, ambulant accessible and wheelchair accessible cubicles.
5. The percentage of residential blocks with a least one fully wheelchair accessible bedroom and connecting bathroom.
6. The percentage of buildings offering evacuation lifts or assisted evacuation lifts.
7. **Who and what does this strategy apply to?**

The UCL inclusive design strategy is applicable to the built environment that UCL Estates is responsible for conceiving, planning, delivering and servicing.

The UCL inclusive design strategy is aimed at everyone engaged in the management of the UCL built environment (from project teams, to maintenance teams, to our service contractors and partners). This includes Departmental sponsors, designers, project managers and officers, engineers, access consultants, cost consultants and operational staff. The strategy also looks to engage with faculties to ensure that inclusive design and inclusion awareness is a consideration through all UCL operations and activities.

1. **The Vision**

Our vision for UCL to provide leadership in creating and maintaining inclusive environments encompassing all our activities. UCL will achieve this vision though three key objectives:

1. To create an inclusive campus, that is welcoming to all.

2. Work inside and outside UCL to embed inclusive design principles across all our estate and operations.

3. To ensure that UCL influences the inclusive design agenda at local, regional, national and at an international level.

1. **Implementing the vision**

**6.1. To create an inclusive campus, that is welcoming to all.**

**6.1.1 Baseline mapping**

The Equality Act 2010 (EA2010) requires service providers and employers to be proactive in making their service more accessible. Essentially it is an anticipatory requirement and UCL will not wait for an individual or group to make a request for an alteration to improve the accessibility / inclusiveness of the university. Before UCL can anticipate what improvements might be needed there is a need to understand what we have now. As such we will undertake the following:

a. Identify the current level of accessibility across the campus. This will start with identifying the accessible sanitary provision across the estate and mapping it in a way that allows building users to identify the nearest facility that meets their needs As part of this work checklists will be drawn up to check accessibility related equipment and spaces against.

b. Identify KPIs to measure the progress in improving accessibility across the estate. It is proposed that these are regularly reported to the Estates Leadership Team and shared with key partners.

By drawing on existing data, both from within UCL and from the access audits and surveys to date, UCL will look to embed the data into the Estates building information to allow us to identify the gaps in provision and prioritise work in those areas. This information will also allow us to begin looking at how we can share this information with staff and students in an easily accessed format in the future.

**6.1.2 Acquisitions**

Due to the anticipatory requirement of the EA2010 to make reasonable adjustments to improve accessibility, UCL must understand the work that any new building acquired or leased would require to make it accessible to staff and students. As such, we propose to undertake the following:

c. Ensure all prospective building acquisitions are access audited as part of the purchasing process so that UCL has a clear picture of the work that would need to be completed once any acquisition is made. Once purchased the works will need to be undertaken.

**6.1.3 Design**

As the EA2010 requires anticipatory consideration of the needs of building users, we will embed inclusive design as a priority on all relevant projects that are undertaken by UCL. This will encompass not just major projects but small works too.

In some exceptional circumstances, more appropriate guidance may apply to particular types of buildings and facilities. Examples include:

• Utility buildings with no public access (e.g. energy centres, sub-stations, etc.).

• Plant rooms, control rooms, utility tunnels.

• Other maintenance related structures.

In such cases, it is recommended that the project teams seek specialist advice and refer to building regulations and health and safety authorities for advice and guidance.

Overall, we will:

d. Ensure that inclusive design is considered at each Stage Gate. (See Annex A)

e. Embed inclusive design into existing standards wherever possible. Existing standards should outline the UCL expectation of the quality of the built environment where we seek to go beyond BS8300.

f. Ensure that all design briefs set out the standards which projects must achieve, currently BS8300.

g. Explore opportunities for best practice which go beyond current standards, or anticipate forthcoming standards.

Through inclusion training and with guidance in the design standards each and every member of the Estates Team should be able to consider inclusive design through the work they do.

**6.1.4 Maintenance**

Maintenance offers a major opportunity to improve the accessibility of UCL’s existing estate, resulting in significant improvements to the everyday lives of building users. For example ensuring that doors don’t get too heavy; improving lighting; ensuring grab rails are securely attached to the wall; ensuring that locks don’t become too stiff to operate; and other similar issues help to improve the experience of UCL but also assist us with being for like to continuous improvement. As such, we will:

h. Create a maintenance checklist of all access aids and facilities across the estate. Maintenance schedules will be developed in liaison with UCL Estates and regularly monitored.

i. As part of our monitoring, we will work with partners to ensure that regular checks are undertaken on door weights, emergency alarm cords, and induction loops etc. to ensure that they are working at all times.

**6.1.5 Training**

To achieve inclusive design, it needs to be seen as a collective endeavour that is the responsibility of not one specialist post but of each and every person involved in the built environment at UCL.

j. Embed this strategy, through inclusion training, and with guidance in the design standards, to all members of the Estates Team, and any other relevant personnel

k. Ensure all new estates staff are given an inclusion induction and that Estates staff undertake on-going inclusive design training through lunchtime sessions and on-line training.

l. Raise awareness of inclusive design through the estates e-newsletter.

m. Develop connections and initiatives with built environment students and staff from The Bartlett to build up a shared body of expertise that can influence the inclusive design agenda at local, regional, national and international levels.

**6.1.6 Engagement**

The expression “nothing about us without us” was first coined by disability rights activists to convey the idea that no policy should be reached without full participation of representatives of all stakeholders. The social model of disability recognises that those with disabilities are not people that need to be ‘fixed’ but that they are individuals who live in a world that ignores their needs. By involving all those who have inclusive design needs UCL can learn from good practice and engage everyone in the on-going challenge that lies ahead of us.

n. Ensure that appropriate input can be given by a diverse range of potential users that reflects the diverse nature of UCL into the Inclusive Design Strategy.

o. Organise focus group meetings with relevant UCL student and staff groups to find out key issues relevant to the design of the estate. Invite the staff networks such as the Enable Network and Disabled Students Network, Astrea, Out@UCL etc., along with any others who use UCL buildings with an inclusion interest to meet to discuss or input into the accessibility and inclusion issues they would like to be considered and to highlight any current access issues associated with the building.

p. Ensure that all issues raised at the meeting are put on to a tracker and that the group get feedback on how each issue has been addressed or the reasons the request cannot be met.

**6.2. Work** **inside and outside UCL to embed inclusive design principles across all our estate and operations.**

It is imperative that UCL Estates continues to draw on best practice in the development of its inclusive design environments. It is proposed that the Access and Inclusion Manager works internally with UCL teams to raise awareness of our objectives and seeks to draw on best practice.

What will we do next?

1. Ensure that the Access and Inclusion Manger works with others across the UCL family to highlight the inclusion agenda and improve the inclusive design awareness of both staff and students.
2. Set up an inclusive environments network for HE Access leads to disseminate good practice.
3. Work with the Provosts EDI team to achieve the BDF Disability Standard

**6.3 To ensure that UCL influences the inclusive design agenda at local, regional, national and at an international level.**

What will we do next?

It is proposed that this Strategy is owned by the UCL estates leadership team and its implementation is overseen by the Access and Inclusion Manager working across the Estates’ teams.

**Annex A** **Managing Inclusive Design through the Stage Gate process**

1. Build UCL's Estates collaboration with other university inclusive campus planning initiatives both nationally and internationally

1. Build UCL’s reputation in engaging with government consultations on inclusive design.
2. Develop models of good practice for students, academic and professional services staff to work together as partners in improving campus access and inclusion; which are evaluated and promoted more widely.
3. Work with The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment to co-develop our expertise in inclusive design, both to have an impact on the UCL campuses and to influence policies and practices across the sector more widely.
4. Build an inclusive campus design framework that can inform developing UCL estates practice as well as promoting it more widely, by integrating existing inclusive design expertise across UCL. To help with this, we can harness existing inclusive design expertise such as the

Global Disability Hub,

PAMELA, and PEARL

DisOrdinary Architecture Project;

and with local advisory and campaigning groups at UCL such as Enable UCL, LGBTQ+ Equality Advisory Group and break/line.

RIBA stage 0 - Strategic Definition

* Identify inclusive design issue from user feedback to be included in the brief

RIBA Stage 1 - Preparation and brief

* Identify relevant user group for consultation and establish communication as early as possible.
* Access audit existing building.
* Identify mandatory design criteria applicable e.g. ADM and BS8300.

RIBA Stage 2 - Concept design.

* Ensure design team has an access consultant who is suitably qualified for the duration of the project and are aware of the UCL Inclusive Design Strategy.
* Desktop design appraisal by UCL Access and Inclusion Manager.
* Undertake consultation with designated user group and incorporate their feedback. Including reporting back to the group how the design has evolved to incorporate their comments.
* Ensure design team engage with UCL Access and Inclusion Manager.

RIBA Stage 3 - Developed design

* Desktop design appraisal of plans by UCL Access and Inclusion Manager.
* Design Team to produce draft access element of DAS.
* Consultation with user group.
* Ensure design team engage with UCL Access and Inclusion Manager.

RIBA Stage 4 - Technical design

* Design Team to prepare AD M and ADB schedule for building control.
* Design Team to update access strategy.

RIBA Stage 5 - Construction

* Review material / samples with UCL Access and Inclusion Manager.
* Raise ad hoc access issues with UCL Access and Inclusion Manager, and user group if deemed necessary.

RIBA Stage 6 - handover and close out

* UCL Access and Inclusion Manager to audit completed works.
* Design team to produce updates access statement for handover to maintenance team.
* Invite user group to view completed works.

RIBA Stage 7 - in use

* Post occupancy audit at 12 months.
* Continual handover actions and updating of access statement.
* Feedback / lessons learnt from user group.

**Annex B** **Additional Sources of Information**

Legislation - Building Regulations

• Approved Document Part M 2015: Access to and Use of Buildings - Volume 2: buildings other than dwellings.

• Approved Document Part K 2013: Protection from Falling, Collision and Impact.

• Other Building Regulations are also relevant to accessibility, for example Part B (Fire Safety) and Part E (Resistance to the passage of sound).

British Standards

• BS8300-2:2018 - Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment Part 2: Buildings – Code of Practice

• BS8300-1:2018 - Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment Part 1: External Environment – Code of Practice

• BS9999 - Fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings - Code of practice

• BS7594 - Code of practice for audio-frequency induction-loop systems (AFILS)

• BS7976-2 Assessing the slip resistance of flooring

• BS1134-1 Assessment of surface texture. Guidance and general information

Further Guidance

• Sign Design Guide – Sign Design Society (2009)

• Changing Places – www.changing-places.org

• CIBSE – Society of Light and Lighting (SLL)

• Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people – government guidance about completing a fire safety risk assessment for people responsible for providing means of escape for disabled people**.**

1. UCL Estates – Strategic Operating Plan 2019-2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It should be noted that these figures only capture the figures for those who have disclosed a protected characteristic. There will be many who fear discrimination and therefore do not disclose and are not captured in these statistics. The true figures will be much higher. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Accessable (formerly known as DisabledGo) provides building by building information on accessibility. This is available through the UCL Estates webpages - https://www.accessable.co.uk/ucl [↑](#footnote-ref-3)