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# Access and Participation Statement

Holmes UK Holdings Ltd. UKPRN 10089691

comprising a network of:

- St Mary's University London International College, UKPRN 10083478
- University of Worcester International College, UKPRN 100834789
- University for the Creative Arts International College, UKPRN 10089687
- University of Bedfordshire International College, UKPRN 10089688
- University of Chichester International College, UKPRN 10089690

November 2021

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## The Access and Participation Statement

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This is the Access and Participation Statement for Holmes UK Holdings Ltd covering the academic year 2022/2023 (September 2022 to August 2023). The statement sets out our arrangements for meeting the expectations of students, our university partners, and the Office for Students (OfS) in terms of access to and participation within our programmes.

### About Holmes

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Holmes Education Group (HEG) is an internationally recognised privately-owned multi-sector provider of education. HEG has had the same corporate directors since it commenced operations in 1986. We have teaching operations in Australia, the UK, Ireland, the USA, and Canada, but we also maintain permanent staff and offices in over a dozen other countries. As a multi-national provider of education, we hold accreditation with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in Australia, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), ACCET in the USA, and Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities in Canada). Each year we welcome over 15,000 students from around the world to our twenty unique campuses.

Holmes UK Holdings Ltd. Is the legal entity for the HEG brand in the UK, and currently operates embedded college partnerships with five English universities:

University	Holmes Embedded College
St Mary's University <a href="http://www.stmarys.ac.uk">www.stmarys.ac.uk</a>	St Mary's University London International College (SMULIC) <a href="http://www.stmarys.ac.uk/smulic/home">www.stmarys.ac.uk/smulic/home</a>
University for the Creative Arts <a href="http://www.uca.ac.uk">www.uca.ac.uk</a>	UCA International College (UCAIC) <a href="http://www.uca.ac.uk/UCAIC/">www.uca.ac.uk/UCAIC/</a>
University of Bedfordshire <a href="http://www.beds.ac.uk">www.beds.ac.uk</a>	University of Bedfordshire International College (UBIC) <a href="http://www.beds.ac.uk/international/ubic/">www.beds.ac.uk/international/ubic/</a>
University of Worcester <a href="http://www.worcester.ac.uk">www.worcester.ac.uk</a>	University of Worcester International College (UWIC) <a href="http://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/academic-schools/university-of-worcester-international-college/home">www.worcester.ac.uk/about/academic-schools/university-of-worcester-international-college/home</a>
University of Chichester <a href="http://www.chi.ac.uk">www.chi.ac.uk</a>	University of Chichester International College (UCIC) <a href="http://www.chi.ac.uk/international/university-chichester-international-college">www.chi.ac.uk/international/university-chichester-international-college</a>

The courses we offer fall in to three main areas:

- Level 3 University Foundation programme, offered to students who fall slightly below the requirements to enter directly into a university, or whose English skills do not meet standard University entry requirements. Our Foundation programmes last for one or two semesters
- Level 4 First-Year programme, offered to students who would like or who require additional academic support to progress and succeed with their studies. Our First-Year programmes generally last for two semesters; and

- Level 6 Pre-Master programme, offered to students with non-cognate degrees or to students who require additional academic support to complete a Master's degree. Our Pre-Master programmes last for either one or two semesters.

Students who have completed the above programmes then progress to our partner universities to complete their respective degree programmes.

All of our partner universities listed above are registered with the Office for Students (OfS) and have extensive Access and Participation plans in place. These plans are made available to all current and prospective students through University websites. Details of the Access and Participation Plans can be found here:

University	Access and Participation Plan
St Mary's University	<a href="https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/access-and-participation-plan-2020-24">Access and Participation Plan 2020-24 (stmarys.ac.uk)</a>
University for the Creative Arts	<a href="https://www.ucreative.ac.uk/1571214120011.pdf">UniversityForTheCreativeArts APP 2020-21-1571214120011.pdf (ucreative.ac.uk)</a>
University of Bedfordshire	<a href="https://www.beds.ac.uk/universityofbedfordshire_app_2020-21_v1_10007152.pdf">universityofbedfordshire app 2020-21 v1 10007152.pdf (beds.ac.uk)</a>
University of Worcester	<a href="https://www.uow.ac.uk/University-of-Worcester-Access-and-Participation-Plan">University-of-Worcester-Access-and-Participation-Plan</a>
University of Chichester	<a href="https://www.uochichester.ac.uk/UniversityOfChichester_APP_2020-21_V1_10007137.pdf">UniversityOfChichester APP 2020-21 V1 10007137.pdf (d3mcbia3evjswv.cloudfront.net)</a>

## Our Strategic Objectives

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We offer our students a supportive and personalised learning environment. We aim for our students to develop into well-rounded and globally focussed individuals who will succeed and progress into one of our partner universities. The learning environment in our colleges is intended to be transformative, and is underpinned by five strategic objectives:

- Delivering exceptional learning and teaching
- Fostering student success, engagement, and employability
- Operating in a financially sustainable manner
- Developing and maintaining a strong international and global ethos; and
- Continuing to seek out and maintain partnerships with institutions which share our values

Our programmes permit students to develop into career-minded, compassionate, global citizens and leaders with a focus on making students 'university ready' following a period of specialised academic immersion and support.

Our colleges are highly internationalised and sit within progressive and diverse UK universities. Our students come from disparate backgrounds and nationalities, and all learners benefit from small group teaching alongside a culture of global citizenship and entrepreneurship.

## Access

Holmes receives no public funding, and none of our students are eligible to access loan or maintenance funding via Student Finance England. Our overarching mission is to provide access to high-quality UK Higher Education for international students who do not meet the usual entry requirements for direct entry to a UK university.

## Admissions

Our Admissions team ensures that no applicant is discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, disability, age, gender, sexuality, political or religious beliefs. We ensure that the criteria and procedures used for selecting students are relevant to the requirements of their pathway and in no way unjustly disadvantage such applicants. We consider all applications in accordance with both the Disability Act 1995 and The Equality Act 2010, and all staff must operate under the UKCISA Code of Ethics. Our entry requirements and admission policies are approved and regularly reviewed by our university partners to ensure fair access.

Some students who apply to study with us are considered as 'non-standard' for reasons such as falling below our usual academic entry requirements, non-traditional pathways of study or through an adverse history of regulatory compliance. These students are interviewed by our team of staff and are counselled on the most appropriate course of action for their individual circumstances. All non-standard applications are considered by the Admissions Board.

We are committed to developing educational opportunities which can be accessed by all qualified applicants and, as such, the admission process is open to all persons with disability or learning needs. We strongly encourage applicants to disclose their disabilities as early as possible to ensure that any necessary support arrangements can be considered and where appropriate made prior to an applicant's arrival at the College.

## Outreach and Engagement

Holmes employs a team of recruitment professionals based in London and throughout the world to assist in our outreach and engagement efforts. These staff all abide by the UKCISA Code of Ethics. In addition, our partner universities have extensive policies and plans for outreach, engagement and widening access. Please see the individual University Access and Participation plans listed above for further information.

## Financial Support

Holmes offers a very wide range of bursaries and scholarships to students in need of financial support. These awards range from £500 to £3000 and are awarded based on criteria including academic merit, participation in extra-curricular activities and financial need. In the last academic year, a total of £640,000 was awarded to incoming students in scholarships and bursaries.

In addition, HEG operates a hardship fund for students who are experiencing financial difficulty (for example unexpected/unplanned increases to their cost of living) whilst studying with us. This hardship fund is accessed by students contacting the relevant student support officers in each College.

## Participation

We strongly believe that students must be partners in learning - as such, strong participation in the educational journey is expected from all students. We encourage participation via:

### Attendance

We believe that students need to attend classes and participate in the learning process to obtain value for money and gain the education that will enable them to progress on to their main undergraduate or postgraduate course. Students at each College are expected to maintain a minimum of an 85% attendance record in each enrolled module. Students are generally expected to be no more than 10 minutes late to class and to return, in a timely manner, from any designated breaks during lessons. Entrance to the class outside of this timeframe is at the discretion of the lecturer and/or the College.

This practice is followed, not only to establish basic learning routines and time management, but to also guarantee that students can absorb and assimilate the information essential to understanding and comprehending a subject/module.

### Representation

In keeping with our view that students should be encouraged to participate in their learning as active stakeholders, as well as in the systems and processes that influence their learning, each College seeks to capture, listen, and respond to the 'student voice'. We consider the measured review of this to be central to ensuring that the learning, teaching and assessment strategies, plans, people, and operations are effective and appropriate.

Within each College students are formally represented in 2 committees:

- the Student Council: a forum for students to raise issues of concern related to their study experience to their peer-representatives ('Student Representatives'); and
- the College Enhancement Committee: a forum including senior representatives of the College's management as well as student representatives, enabling the student voice to be involved in the substantive development and enhancement student experience at each of the Colleges and their respective universities

In addition, we operate two formal student surveys every semester:

- a Module Survey: to benchmark and assess student opinion on academic delivery of modules on a programme; and
- a Student Satisfaction Survey: to benchmark and assess student opinion on non-academic provision within the College

Results of surveys are discussed, and action plans formulated at College Board of Studies meetings, the College Enhancement Committee and at the Student Council. Results of the Module Survey are passed to the University to assist in annual monitoring reports. Surveys are also monitored at the corporate level to identify any systemic issues affecting multiple colleges in the network.

### Students in Need of Support Programme (SINOS)

Each College continually monitors each student's attendance and academic performance in scheduled study sessions and overall experience during their time at the College. If it is deemed that any of the following conditions have been met a student may be placed on the SINOS Programme:

- the student's attendance rate for one or more modules drops below 85% or they have an inconsistent pattern of attendance
- the student or an academic tutor has highlighted that they require extra academic support; or
- the student is a minor or has personal circumstances which may impede their performance

The purpose of the SINOS Programme is to facilitate an intervention which is supportive and/or remedial in nature; it is not intended as a punitive instrument, although in some cases it may necessarily precede or run parallel to such measures, and students placed on the programme are made explicitly aware of this. The SINOS Programme is intended to ensure the wellbeing of all students from both an academic and pastoral perspective. Any issue that could lead to a student not being able to fulfil his/her potential is required to be assessed and supported by College student services. The SINOS Programme tracks and monitors students that have been identified as requiring additional support. This enhanced monitoring also ensures that the College/the University have detailed and up-to-date records for any students that may be in danger of breaching their obligations under their Student Route Visa as stipulated by UKVI/Home Office.

### **Access to University services**

Every student within a college has access to the support services offered by our partner universities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- the Student Union/Association
- Employability and careers services
- Disability services
- Faith provision
- Mental health and wellbeing services

Access to the above services can be on a referral basis (from the College to the University) or students may approach university services as an independent user.

## **Monitoring**

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We continually monitor the success of our students via Service Level Agreements and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which may be agreed with our partner universities. Examples of KPIs which are monitored include:

- Demographic information on new cohorts of students
- Average attendance rates
- Continuation and progression rates between stages of study
- Academic outcomes of progressed students (including 'good degree' outcomes where this is possible)

## Improvement and Enhancement

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In the spirit of continuous improvement to the quality of our academic provision, and enhancements to the student experience, each College commits to the following actions:

- To embed a coherent and consistent approach to student engagement
- To facilitate the growth and development of quality-based student experience
- To facilitate the growth of a culture of stakeholder ownership in the academic environment
- To enhance the quality of delivery of learning experiences
- To embed standardised mechanisms for student feedback and dissemination of change because of feedback
- To improve the levels of engagement of students in the life and management of the College
- To embed a culture based on continuous enhancement of the student experience
- To facilitate more formal and better opportunities for the student voice to be heard, considered, and responded to
- To foster active student participation in the emplacement of quality systems, including using individual and collective feedback from students
- To implement transparent mechanisms, agreed with students, for the nomination and election of student representatives
- To provide induction and on-going support for students and staff appropriate to their quality assurance roles; and
- To monitor, review and enhance the effectiveness of their policies and processes for engaging students in their quality processes

Specific actions over the next academic year include:

- To ameliorate the diversity within student cohorts by sourcing students from even more wide-reaching countries and regions
- To review the provision of scholarship fees to new students
- To engage with university colleagues on possible progression scholarships for students who demonstrate strong academic merit during their pathway course
- To encourage greater student participation within the wider university community, including within clubs and societies, and in elected student representative positions
- To commit to investment in digital literacy programmes for both staff and students
- To review annually the academic provision to assure the Senior Management Group that the present validated courses remain current and fit for purpose

## Approval Information

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This statement was approved by the Senior Management Group of Holmes UK Holdings Ltd. and is reviewed on an annual basis. The most recent date of review was September 2021 for the 2022/23 academic year.

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