Access and Participation Statement

1. About University Centre Quayside (UCQ)

Since 2009 University Centre Quayside (UCQ) has supported apprentices across the North East of England and in London, on intermediate, advanced and higher apprenticeships. Now, with locations across the six largest metropolitan areas in England, UCQ deliver the BA (Hons) in Professional Management and wider, Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA). Delivered by sector specialists and leading practitioners, the programme has a strong focus on experiential learning, with the contextualisation of assignments directly to the student's employment. Delivery takes place through a hybrid learning model; it is responsive and tailored to suit the needs of both employer and student.

The 2017/18 academic year saw the launch of the UCQ Essential Work Skills (EWS) programmes. These programmes have been designed to align with the needs of sector employers and assist students to gain new skills, confidence and improve their likelihood of achieving an employment outcome. The course content relating to each EWS programme has been negotiated with industry bodies to ensure participants are well prepared and provided with the correct skill base for the workplace. UCQ EWS Tutors are experienced in delivering against best practice industry standards and work closely with students to provide the access to practical skills they need to be 'job ready'.

UCQ and the programmes we deliver across higher and further education aim to widen access and participation for all those who have the desire to learn and become professional, inspiring and competent leaders.

1.1 Our vision and mission

Our vision is to be a leading provider of further and higher education in England.

Our mission is to enable all students, staff and organisations with whom we work, to achieve their potential.

1.2 Our core values

The team at UCQ work by a set of core values. These values define the UCQ way of doing business and guide our decisions and interactions with students, employers, partners and other stakeholders.

1.2.1 Actively engaged

- We are open minded in our approach on where, how and to whom we deliver our programmes.
- We act with a sense of urgency whilst taking care over the job at hand
- We strive to do things right the first time
- We are thorough and do not cut corners
- We always strive to improve whilst being considerate about how we do things today
- We watch for changes in the market
- We understand what is happening around us, seeking new ideas and innovating
- We seek out solutions to our customers' pains
- We learn from our successes and failures

1.2.2 Being modest

- We give people the freedom and trust to decide what to do
- We are open to new ideas, experiences and ways of working
- We acknowledge our weaknesses as well as our strengths
- We support our people and pick them up when they fail
- We really understand our customer's needs by actively listening to them
- We respect and take the time to understand others
- We are authentic, open and transparent
- We promote positively and celebrate our successes
- We know when to maintain confidentiality and discretion

1.2.3 Integrity and candour

- We can be counted on to do what we say
- We are honest and accountable
- We strive to always do the right thing, even when no one can see us
- We say it as it is but continue to be respectful and fair to others
- We are as open about the bad news as we are about the good
- We give input during discussion, and always back the end decision
- We have the personal strength to take the tough right decisions

1.2.4 Our people

- We recruit, develop and retain the right people
- We have a "can do, will do" attitude
- We create constant dialogue centered on open and honest two-way communication
- We reward high performance
- We are innovative, stimulating and a fun place to be and work
- We all contribute to a collaborative working environment build on a foundation of mutual respect and trust
- We are in this together, operating with unity and inclusivity

1.3 Our strategic goals

1.3.1 Excellence in teaching, learning and assessment

We aim to support and inspire students to a successful outcome, through gaining new knowledge, skills and behaviours. To meet this aim, we will:

- Maintain a safe and supportive environment where excellence in teaching, learning and assessment is expected and valued
- Develop flexible, contextualised programmes relevant to the students, employers and external stakeholders
- Ensure an individualised, flexible learning journey
- Achieve the highest possible quality standards
- Exceed national benchmarks for learner outcomes
- High satisfaction ratings

1.3.2   Excellence in partnership and community engagement

We aim to further develop and maintain strong, collaborative and effective stakeholder relationships.To meet this aim we:

- Have effective engagement strategies
- Be responsive and flexible in meeting the needs of stakeholders
- Maximise our reputation as a leading provider of further and higher education in England
- Support the widening of participation and social inclusion in education
- High satisfaction ratings.

1.3.3   Sustainable financial independence

We aim to improve the strength of our financial wellbeing so that we can achieve our strategic goals. To meet this aim, we:

- Ensure financial resilience and tenacity
- Provide value in our provision
- Deliver against our long terms plan whilst staying independently viable in the short and medium term

1.3.4   Achieve full university title and be regarded as a leading provider of work-based higher education in England

We aim to be recognised by the Office for Students as a private university. To meet this aim, we:

- Maintain good working relationships with the OU.
- Continue to deliver high quality provision.
- Achieve Office for Students registration
- Achieve the highest possible quality standards
- Achieve new DAPs and indefinite DAPs
- Achieve University Title
- To provide innovative approaches to programme design and execution, supported by increased activity with the wider academic and scholarly communities.
- High satisfaction ratings
- Continue to sponsor Essential Work Skills provision.

1.3.5   Be recognised as an excellent place to work

We aim to develop conscientious, flexible and highly skilled staff who are proud of where they work, and show commitment to students colleagues and stakeholders.To meet this aim we:

- Maintain a safe and supportive environment and culture where excellence is expected, recognised and rewarded.
- Promote equality and diversity throughout the organisation.
- Invest in the development of our workforce.
- Actively seek, attract and retain new talent.
- Promote work/life balance and health and wellbeing.
- Achieve high satisfaction ratings.

1.4 Widening access and participation

We aim to create and maintain a diverse community of students, employers and staff by encouraging access and participation. To meet this aim, we:

- Encourage students from a wide range of backgrounds, including those that would not otherwise have engaged in our programmes
- Embed equality and diversity in everything we do from course design and promotion to delivery
- Strive to avoid any capable students from being deterred to join the UCQ community
- Foster an environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression whilst operating within best practice safeguarding and Prevent frameworks

We achieve these objectives in widening access and participation by:

- Supporting our students in their development to achieve a successful outcome and to seize a progression opportunity
- Continuing to be at the forefront of emerging education, qualification and funding reformation, to widen participation and inclusivity
- Ensuring staff and students with particular needs have access to the resources and facilities they need
- Broadening the enrolment pool
- Training staff in equality and diversity measures

We collect information relating to a student's prior qualifications, background and protected characteristics to ensure we can appropriately monitor the diversity of the student body. We market and actively encourage employers to look at existing staff who have traditionally chosen a vocational route to employment or who may not have had the opportunity to attend higher education earlier in life. If we feel employers are being limited in who they put forward for the programme, we would seek to address this by providing education and guidance to our employer groups during the recruitment process.

The Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship (CMDA) is paid for by the employer or via a government co-contribution arrangement, with no cost to the student. This means that any financial barrier to higher education for the student is immediately negated. The Education and Skills Funding Agency rules of funding prohibit the apprentice from financial contribution and state that the apprenticeship must be able to be completed within the apprentice's normal working hours. The apprentice must be paid for both on and off the job training on at least the minimum national wage for apprentices. The employer is advised of their obligations under these rules of funding and must sign a contractual agreement agreeing to these terms prior to the start of the programme.

As an organisation we ensure that all delivery sites are wheelchair accessible and a thorough health, safety and Covid-secure vetting exercise is undertaken at each site prior to the commencement of the programme.

2.   Accessibility and recruitment

UCQ aims to ensure equality of opportunity for applicants and for all students in teaching, learning and assessment. We strive to create an environment whereby students are treated solely on the basis of their academic achievement, ability and potential, regardless of age, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, family or marital status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation or disability.

The initial eligibility benchmarks for the CMDA and EWS programmes is underpinned by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) rules of funding.

For the CMDA, admissions are processed in accordance with our Apprenticeship Admissions Policy. Initial eligibility criteria is set by the ESFA and apprentices are expected to demonstrate a minimum level two in English and Maths. UCQ do not exercise programme admissions based on UCAS points. We believe recruitment efforts should encompass all types of learners from all types of backgrounds and should not be restricted to those who have chosen a traditionally academic route to higher education. Our specialist team work with stakeholders, employers and the applicant to confirm:

- The applicant meets the eligibility and suitability requirements of the programme
- For the CMDA, the applicant has achieved a minimum level two qualification in English and maths prior to enrolment. In cases where applicants have not already achieved this, our team will support the student in achieving the qualification/s during the first year of their programme
- The applicant undergoes initial diagnostic testing to identify any additional support needs
- The applicant has a demonstrable interest in, and commitment to, the subject
- The programme is appropriate to the applicant's interests, aspirations and work
- Non-academic achievement and/or relevant experience indicates a likely and positive contribution to the programme of study and the UCQ community

Prior to enrolment, students are invited to attend taster sessions whereby they can get a feel for the type of session that will take place and discuss any potential concerns. An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is created with and for every student prior to starting on a programme. This plan provides a comprehensive guide to their programme, discusses each person's roles and responsibilities and identifies and addresses any additional support needs the student may have.

For higher education programmes, UCQ also operates a procedure whereby a student may be able to claim academic credit for relevant previous study or learning experiences, known as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

3.   Flexibility in approach: CMDA

UCQ's BA (Hons) in Professional Management and the wider Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship have been developed in partnership with employers to facilitate innovative and flexible delivery. Students are not required to attend UCQ one or more days per week. Rather, students engage in a hybrid learning model using interactive online learning opportunities, tutorials, workplace mentoring, and self-study activities. UCQ are flexible in both delivery and course start date. Cohorts can commence their programme throughout the year.

Students are assessed using a range of methods: contextualised assignments, projects, case studies, group working, workbooks, presentations, actual working practice, peer reviews or workplace

observations where applicable. There are no exams. We believe giving equal consideration to knowledge, skills and behaviours is the most effective and inclusive way of assessing our students.

Students will always be supported even if they change employment. Those that are unable to complete their studies are offered exit awards throughout the programme.

4. IAG and student support

UCQ underwent a triennial revalidation event in October 2019 to maintain Matrix accreditation to October 2022, subject to additional annual improvement reviews. The Matrix Standard is a quality framework for organisations to assess and measure information, advice and guidance (IAG) services which ultimately supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals. The decision was made for UCQ to maintain accreditation, this was based on a number of identified strengths:

- UCQ has a strong culture of support with a consultative management approach
- UCQ works closely with employers and students to tailor its support, with innovative approaches to learning
- UCQ has developed an excellent reputation with partner organisations for providing a high level of service to their students and employer groups
- Students feel UCQ staff are open and accessible, knowledgeable and committed to providing encouragement and support appropriate to their needs.

Every higher education student receives access to the UCQ Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), online learning library Perlego and a Chartered Management Institute (CMI) membership. Access and membership provides extensive online learning, resources and support from start to finish.

Higher education students are also provided ongoing professional and pastoral support through the Professional Development Assessors. The Professional Development Assessors work with students, meeting on a regular basis, to provide coaching, mentoring and assessment within the student's own workplace where applicable. They also encourage and assist with the reflection of progress to date, follow up with students who are not making satisfactory progress, liaise with other members of staff as appropriate, provide career advice, write references and document general information on attendance so that non-attendance can be reported back to UCQ.

Higher education students requiring additional academic support within their first year will be referred to the HE Academic Support Tutor. The HE Academic Support Tutor supports students to develop their academic writing and study skills.

Counselling and welfare support is also available should students wish to seek additional support regarding the pressures they are facing at work or in everyday life.

Both higher education and EWS students have access to ongoing IAG and specialist tutors who are experienced in delivering best practice industry standards.

UCQ's support arrangements are published on the Student Space website.