

## **London School of Academics Access and Participation Statement**

**April 2018**

London School of Academics is a higher education provider in England with a specialist area of teacher training. Our establishment is committed to ensuring that the courses we deliver are accessible to all our students, this statement sets out our commitment to improving access, success and progression for our students from all backgrounds.

London School of Academics draws up this statement in line with the Regulatory Advice provided by the Office for Students<sup>1</sup> to ensure that it takes account of good practice. This statement is also drawn up through consultation and engagement with the Learner Representative Society which is formed of students.

London School of Academics takes account of and values the Office for Students' ambitions which are that "everyone should be able to study at a higher education provider that meets their needs and aspirations; that all students should be supported to succeed in their studies; and that the higher education sector delivers on the promise of higher education as an engine for social mobility, and a gateway to a better life for those who undertake it"<sup>2</sup>.

This above ambition is valuable to London School of Academics as our establishment was established to provide an opportunity for all to enter the teaching sector regardless of background. Over the many years from establishment, London School of Academics has enabled underrepresented groups to train as teachers, as we offer a vocational teacher training course as our main course. This course enables those with vocational qualifications such as in trades like fitness, hairdressing, beauty and construction to progress as teachers/trainers.

London School of Academics was established in 2010 by Sheila Singh, who herself faced adversity when accessing education due to her background. She however, did not allow this to be a limiting factor. She set up London School of Academics to pave the way to enabling access to those that find themselves in a similar situation. London School of Academics focuses on community regeneration and economic growth, targeting groups which suffer the highest unemployment levels.

Sheila Singh was awarded in 2012, the Entrepreneur of Excellence Award for Gender from the National Diversity Awards for the establishment of London School of Academics. This emphasises on the commitment of our establishment to provide disadvantaged students with the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

London School of Academics' mission is to create excellence within teacher training and staff development, through quality and precision, targeting individuals who want to improve both their lives and the lives of others. The following sets out an overview of how we ensure our mission and our commitment that the courses we deliver are accessible to all our students from all backgrounds and how we will continue to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulatory Advice 7: Advice on preparing your 2019-20 access and participation statement (Reference OfS 2018.07)

<sup>2</sup> Regulatory Advice 7: Advice on preparing your 2019-20 access and participation statement (Reference OfS 2018.07), page 1

Access:

London School of Academics delivers vocational courses through City and Guilds (awarding body). The courses we deliver enable a wide range of applicants seeking to study courses relating to teaching the ability to apply. Applicants applying for our main course which is a level 5 Initial Teacher Training course do not need to have a degree as there are alternative entry requirements. These are three level 3 qualifications in subject specialism or two level 4 qualifications in subject specialism.

Our entry requirements enable applicants to apply for our course without degrees and from areas of low higher education participation; for example, Barking and Dagenham. Applicants from trade backgrounds and vocational education backgrounds, for example, the Army, hairdressing, beauty and construction are eligible to apply to study our course. Currently those studying on our course without a degree amounts to 14% for the September 2017 intake and 7% for the January 2018 intake.

London School of Academics will continue to enable learners without degrees to apply for our courses (provided this is permitted by our course awarding body) as we feel this enables wider access to education for those that are underrepresented such as those that come from low higher education participation areas and vocational education backgrounds. Our continued practice will be measured through our admission's data and reviewed during our admission review meetings. London School of Academics for our main course delivered aims to ensure that the percentage of those we enrol with alternative entry requirements is no less than 5% of our overall intake for September and January. This percentage has been set considering the volume of applicants that have applied meeting entry requirements over the last three years. This percentage is the minimum percentage, therefore does not limit our ability to take on students with alternative entry requirements outside of this percentage.

London School of Academics have a robust admissions process which ensures that there is no discrimination, therefore those applying are assessed on their merits in line with entry requirements. During the admissions process those applying for our courses have an opportunity to state any disabilities or difficulties they have, this enables our establishment to put in measures to support them before the start of their course. Our establishment welcomes students with disabilities/learning difficulties, from severe to mild. For example, students that have studied on our course have had disabilities (defined by HESA<sup>3</sup>) from visual impairment, limb loss, cancer, arthritis, high blood pressure, dyslexia, cerebral palsy and diabetes. The following shows the percentage of students currently studying on our course with a disability; September 2017 intake (9%) and January 2018 intake (19%).

London School of Academics will continue to ensure there is no discrimination during the admissions process through updating our admissions process and training all those that are from our team who are involved in the admissions process. Applicants will continue to have an opportunity to state any disabilities or difficulties they have as this will enable the team to put in measures to support a successful applicant's journey. London School of Academics will provide learners with a Health Questionnaire during the admissions process as the team can then implement a fair assessment of the learner's fitness to practise; our Fitness to Practise

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c16051/a/disable>

Policy is published on our website for all applicants to view. London School of Academics, for our main course delivered aim to ensure that the percentage of those we enrol with a disability/learning difficulty is no less than 5% of our overall intake for September and January. This percentage has been set considering our courses have a limited intake of students and considering the volume of applicants with a disability over the last three years. This percentage is the minimum percentage, therefore does not limit our ability to take on students with a disability/learning difficulty outside of this percentage.

London School of Academics welcomes applicants of all ages, a majority of our learners are classified as mature learners and are seeking to change career. We ensure that mature applicants are not disadvantaged by our admissions process and have equal opportunities in terms of entering the education sector utilising subject specialisms gained through previous study. Currently those studying on our course who are mature students amount to; for September 2017 intake (100%) and for January 2018 intake (100%).

London School of Academics will continue to welcome applicants of all ages. London School of Academics will ensure to provide an opportunity for mature applicants to showcase their experience, professional achievements in addition to their academic background during admission. Our admissions process consists of an interview, this enables all applicants of all ages to engage in a conversation with a member of the admissions team before an assessment is made as to their application. London School of Academics can highlight that our intake is mainly mature students, therefore we will set out to ensure that at least 50% of our intake for September and for January consists of mature students. This percentage has been set considering the volume of applicants who are classified as mature over the last three years. This percentage is the minimum percentage, therefore does not limit our ability to take on mature students outside of this percentage.

London School of Academics takes account of the Equality Act 2010 and welcomes applicants with protected characteristics, these are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Our establishment welcomes students of particular ethnicities from underrepresented groups<sup>4</sup>. The following sets out the percentage of students studying our course from an underrepresented group:

September 2017 intake:

Underrepresented groups:	Overall percentage of intake
Black British African Black British Caribbean Black Other Asian British Indian Asian British Pakistani	91%

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he/characteristics>

January 2018 intake:

Underrepresented groups:	Overall percentage of intake
Black British African Black British Caribbean Black Other	97%

Our establishment, to highlight, enables access to study for those that are pregnant or are on maternity leave, for example in our current intake there are three students with such protected characteristics.

London School of Academics aims to ensure that we continue to have a diverse range of students studying our courses, this is however dependent on the applicants that apply, as our establishment is a small provider. Our establishment considering that we have a limited number of applicants applying for our courses will aim to ensure that at least 50% of our September and January intake consists of underrepresented groups and those with protected characteristics. This percentage has been set considering the volume of applicants over the last three years who are from an underrepresented group or have a protected characteristic other than disability (a separate target percentage has been set out above). This percentage is the minimum percentage, therefore does not limit our ability to take on students from an underrepresented group or with a protected characteristic outside of this percentage.

#### Success:

London School of Academics have several measures in place to support students from underrepresented groups, and to promote inclusion between these groups and other students. London School of Academics has an Open-Door approach which runs across all our courses. Our Open-Door approach enables students to approach all members of the team with regards to support they need, support includes pastoral and academic, students can also approach to voice concerns. This approach enables a rapport to be built and ease of communication. London School of Academics will ensure that this Open-Door approach continues through informing students of it during their induction day as well as ensure easy access to our Student Welfare Policy as this sets out our student support available. Our course Enhancement Strategy will also be made available for ease of access through continuous publication on the Student Virtual Learning Environment.

Pastoral and academic support is offered through a Personal Tutor and Learner Mentor. All our students have access to this support; they are assigned to a Personal Tutor and Learner Mentor. Students of ethnic minority groups have benefited from such support and successfully completed the course. For example, we have had many students that have needed support with academic writing as they have been schooled abroad. We will ensure that this support is continued through assigning a Personal Tutor and Learner Mentor for the next intakes.

London School of Academics has a Student Welfare Officer, this ensures that learners have a designated person to seek welfare support from in addition to an assigned personal tutor. This will continue through the continuous employment of a Student Welfare Officer.

Our courses are designed to take account of protected characteristics which include age and disability. Sessions are carried out at a suitable time and sessions are differentiated for those that require support. For example, we had a student with limb loss which limited their mobility, through differentiation and an encouraging approach they were included in sessions, resulting in the successful completion of their course. Our establishment will continue to ensure courses are suitable for our students through pre-planning and differentiation for those with protected characteristics.

London School of Academics has a Learner Representative Society which is formed of students from each intake. Students part of the society form the communication link between our team and students who prefer to voice through an elected peer. The Learner Representative Society offers a support platform for underrepresented groups; therefore we will ensure to encourage the election of Learner Representatives for future intakes enabling the establishment of a Learner Representative Society.

London School of Academics meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Through the meeting of expectations our establishment meets the quality mark in terms of enabling students to study courses which would gear them towards success. Our establishment will continue to work in line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education therefore meeting quality expectations set.

#### Progression:

London School of Academics ensures the progression of students from underrepresented groups through working with several local employers and recruitment agencies. This provides wider opportunities for our students when they consider employment. The use of local employers and recruitment agencies results in a wide pool of jobs that those with a disability are not at a disadvantage. All our students from all backgrounds benefit from our relationships with local employers and recruitment agencies. London School of Academics will continue to work with local employers and recruitment agencies to provide all a wide range of career opportunities. London School of Academics will invite at least two local employers or agencies to student graduation ceremonies to further promote the opportunity to get into employment, through having these present, it enables students of underrepresented groups an opportunity for face to face interaction.

London School of Academics embeds career development workshops into the courses we run, these workshops focus on key skills to enable CV writing, job searching and interviewing. Students considering further study have the opportunity through their course to talk to their personal tutor or learner mentor about such and can obtain an academic reference. London School of Academics will continue to provide career development workshops as part of our courses as this ensures a focus on key skills needed to successfully secure employment. We will also ensure that there is support for students considering further study through the assignment of a personal tutor to each student and having learner mentors.

This statement has been drawn up with student consultation and engagement. Methods used to consult and engage learners has been through a meeting and proofing of the draft with the opportunity to make influential comments through a feedback survey. From consultation and

engagement it has been highlighted that the statement is written clearly and is easy to understand. A comment expressed through consultation and engagement was to provide a support and mentor programme for students considering self-employment, this has influenced our approach in relation to progression as we aim for our next main course delivered (September 2018) to include within our career development workshops consideration of self-employment and setting up of a business/company.

**Review:**

London School of Academics will annually review this statement on the 5th of August 2019 to capture data at the end of the academic year, annual review will thereafter be in August . Annual review will ensure this statement is fully effective.

Drafted: Soni Singh (Curriculum Manager): 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2018

Consulted and engaged: Learner Representative Society and establishment team

Approved: Sheila Singh (Managing Director): 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2018

Approved: Board of Governance: 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2018

Annual review: 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2019