Westminster Theological Centre

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An 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 Westminster Theological Centre at https://wtctheology.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Access-and-Participation-Plan-10030973.pdf.

Key points

Westminster Theological Centre (WTC) is an interdenominational Christian theological college. Our degrees are validated by Birmingham Newman University. We have on average between 220 to 240 students per year on validated programmes, with another 60 to 70 on a fully online Foundations Course.

We have no campus. All our students study part-time, blending in-person and online teaching through twelve local learning Hub centres across the UK. Students stay in their home locations and study around work and family commitments.

Our students range from 18 to 81. More than 90% are mature students and around 80% remain in paid employment during their studies. Our plan focuses on three groups: people with a recent history of offending or addiction, students from non-white ethnic backgrounds, and students who would struggle to pay their fees.

See pages 1 to 7 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

Students that started in 2025-26 paid £4,500 a year for our part-time undergraduate programmes. We do not offer full-time courses.

We hold fees at the same level for each two-year period of study on a programme. WTC follows the Higher Education sector's recommendation on fee increases. Any future increases will be in line with inflation, while also taking into account comparisons with similar theological college fee rates across the UK. More information on fees is available at https://wtctheology.org.uk/study-with-us/fees-n-faqs/.

See Annex C, page 24 to 28 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Financial help available

We offer two bursaries. A bursary is money towards fees that does not have to be paid back:

- The **Principal's Bursary Fund** supports students with a recent history (within the past five years) of offending or addiction. It can cover up to 90% of fees each year, and students can re-apply for it every year of their studies.
- The **General Bursary** is means-tested and open to students with a household income of £27,500 a year or below. It can cover up to 40% of fees each year for Certificate and BA students, and up to 20% for Graduate Diploma students.

We also point students towards independent grant-making bodies that fund theological study. Links to these are on our website. We plan to increase our spending on bursaries from £45,000 in 2025-26 to £85,000 by 2028-29. Detailed information on bursaries can be found at https://wtctheology.org.uk/study-with-us/bursary-information/.

See pages 5 to 7 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Our website sets out our fees, what they do and do not cover, the extra costs students should plan for, and the financial help available. For programmes lasting more than two years, we also publish the maximum amount fees can rise. Additionally, prospective students can hear more about finances for study as part of our Open Evenings and Online Open Events, or speak with a WTC staff member or Hub Director. Current students receive fee and finance information throughout their course.

See pages 22 to 23 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

We have set three objectives by 2028-29:

- **Objective 1:** Grow the number of students supported by the Principal's Bursary Fund by 25%, so that students with a recent history of offending or addiction make up 4.375% of all students (up from 3.5% now), and help them achieve their full academic potential.
- **Objective 2:** Increase the share of non-white students from 8% to at least 12% of the student body.
- **Objective 3:** Make sure that financial constraints are not the primary reason someone turns down a place with us, or withdraws from their course.

See pages 7 to 8 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

Students with a history of offending or addiction: We are building relationships with organisations that support ex-offenders and people recovering from addiction. We are raising extra funds for the Principal's Bursary Fund, and producing material (videos, brochures, social media) to share the stories of past students who are happy to tell them to encourage future applications. Our Learning Development Tutor gives these students regular one-to-one study skills support.

Ethnic diversity: WTC will seek feedback from our non-white students every two years and act on all suggestions that can realistically be implemented. We are building relationships with Black-majority and other non-white majority churches, particularly in London, and aim to open a new Hub in partnership with at least one of them. We aim to prioritise the recruitment of qualified non-white teaching staff, and all staff and trustees will receive regular equality, diversity and inclusion training.

Ability to pay fees: WTC has been approved by the Office for Students, providing access to Student Finance Loans for qualifying students on specific programmes. We are also fundraising to grow our bursaries. Should uptake of a bursary be low, WTC will look to create additional bursaries for other disadvantaged groups based on evidence from the WTC student body.

See pages 9 to 16 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

Each Hub elects a Student Representative who gathers feedback from fellow students. Representatives meet senior staff twice a year, and the minutes and actions are shared with all students. Students commented on the draft of this plan, and their comments shaped the final version.

Progress against the plan will be a standing item at every Student Representative meeting. Student Representatives will also be invited to comment on the evaluation of the targets in the last six months of the APP and their comments will be included in the final evaluation report.

See pages 21 to 22 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

We will monitor each activity every year. This includes the number of students applying for and receiving bursaries, the number of non-white students, the support students request, and the reasons students give for turning down places or withdrawing. We will compare our results year on year with national statistics, and survey students in the target groups to find out what has helped them most.

In the final six months of the plan, we will evaluate what worked, what did not, and the value for money of each activity. The college's Trustees will oversee this evaluation. We will publish the findings on our website, share them with other theological colleges, and submit them to the Office for Students.

See page 22 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact Rich Lush at doo@wtctheology.org.uk for more information.