# Goldsmiths bets on creativity and local access as it emerges leaner from financial crisis



Goldsmiths of London is pitching itself as a leaner, more focused institution as it emerges from two years of acute financial strain. According to a recent profile, the university has been forced to shrink student intake and make “hefty savings” after a fall in income and applications: just 1,635 students were admitted via UCAS to courses starting in September 2024, compared with 2,780 in 2017. Yet the New Cross Gate campus retains a strong creative identity — the prospectus even declares, “Different is what we do” — and the college points to a long record of producing leading artists and cultural figures as evidence that its distinctive mission remains intact.

Goldsmiths says the structural changes that underpinned its recovery have now been completed and put the institution on a firmer footing. According to the university’s account of its Transformation Programme, the initiative formally closed in December 2024 after delivering targeted savings, course renewals and a new faculty structure intended to secure financial sustainability. The university frames the overhaul as necessary rather than elective, and its public materials thank staff for their contribution while describing the changes as creating a platform for future growth and curriculum review.

The fall in undergraduate numbers has not been evenly distributed. Goldsmiths reports that a quarter of last year’s intake were international students, while a heavy majority of its domestic recruits come from London boroughs — a pattern that helps drive the socially and ethnically diverse student body for which the institution is best known. That local focus is reflected in several targeted support schemes and in admissions policies designed to preserve access for under‑represented groups.

Financial support is being used deliberately to sustain widening participation. The university’s published awards include an Access Programme Scholarship of £1,000 a year for students who enter via Access to Higher Education courses, and Equity Awards of £3,000 a year aimed at Black, Asian and minority ethnic students — both schemes are explicitly framed as part of Goldsmiths’ widening‑participation activity and are subject to eligibility and competitive selection rules. Goldsmiths also highlights a Lewisham Borough fee‑waiver scheme, New Cross Fire bursaries administered with Lewisham Council to commemorate the 1981 tragedy, and travel bursaries to ease the cost of commuting for eligible local students.

Accommodation costs — an increasingly important factor for applicants — are set out in the university’s published guidance. On standard 42‑week contracts, weekly rents range across halls: Surrey House rooms are advertised at roughly £183–£387 per week, while Town Hall Camberwell studio rates sit around £230–£408.50 per week, matching the headline annual figures prospective students see in the university’s budget examples and enabling applicants to calculate total costs more precisely.

Alongside financial belt‑tightening, Goldsmiths has prioritised improvements in student support and the learning environment. The institution points to improved National Student Survey results in 2024 as evidence that it has begun to turn a corner. Its restructuring included a revamped personal‑tutoring model designed to bring academic and wellbeing support closer together, with senior tutors in departments to handle complex cases and discrete neurodiversity and mental‑health groups available within some subject areas. The university also says students can access counselling and specialist therapies — including art therapy — with a limited number of sessions available, alongside one‑to‑one mentoring and study‑skills help.

To broaden access for applicants who lack traditional qualifications, Goldsmiths has added several integrated degrees that include a foundation year. The university’s prospectus and undergraduate pages list integrated pathways in subjects such as English, history, journalism, sociology, social work, promotional media, and politics with international relations; successful completion of the foundation year is presented as the route to progression onto the three‑year honours programme, with course pages spelling out fees and programme specifics.

Despite the progress the university describes, the picture is mixed. Goldsmiths claims the Transformation Programme delivered the savings and structural resets needed for stability, and it has set in motion a wider academic review that the institution says will align courses with national and global priorities including climate justice, mental health, social inequality and the impact of artificial intelligence on the creative and cultural industries. But the intake numbers and low application levels remain material challenges, and the university’s recovery will be judged over coming recruitment cycles as it seeks to convert the structural changes into renewed growth.

As Goldsmiths prepares to mark its 120th year this autumn, the college’s character — its emphasis on creativity, diversity and community — remains central to its pitch to students. The university points to continuing cultural successes, including alumni recognition at the Turner Prize, as part of the argument that its particular mix of artistic edge and civic engagement can survive and, the institution hopes, thrive under the new arrangements.

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## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/staff-students/info/transformation-programme/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships-list-for-fb/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships/access-programme-scholarship/), [[5]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships/goldsmiths-equity-awards/), [[6]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships-list-for-fb/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/accommodation/digital-accommodation-guide/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/staff-students/info/transformation-programme/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/ug/integrated-degrees/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 8 – [[2]](https://www.gold.ac.uk/staff-students/info/transformation-programme/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/university-guide/article-14914829/Goldsmiths-University-London.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gold.ac.uk/staff-students/info/transformation-programme/> - Goldsmiths’ Transformation Programme page outlines the university’s institutional restructuring following a severe financial challenge. It explains that the programme formally closed in December 2024 after delivering targeted savings, course renewals and a new faculty structure intended to secure financial sustainability. The page thanks staff for their contributions and asserts the changes establish firmer foundations for future growth and curriculum review. It summarises aims to simplify the portfolio, reshape professional services and reduce costs, and indicates ongoing work to align courses with national and global priorities while supporting students and staff through the transition. The page includes timelines and contact information.
3. <https://www.gold.ac.uk/ug/integrated-degrees/> - Goldsmiths’ integrated degrees page describes undergraduate programmes that include a foundation year to support students who lack traditional entry qualifications. It lists multiple integrated routes such as English, History, Journalism, Sociology, Social Work, Promotional Media and Politics with International Relations, explaining that successful completion of the foundation year leads to progression onto the three‑year honours degree. The page emphasises individual tutorial support, subject‑specific preparation and development of academic skills, and notes that applicants apply through UCAS. Fees for foundation years and course-specific details are given on each programme’s page, with the integrated pathway presented as widening participation and alternative access.
4. <https://www.gold.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships/access-programme-scholarship/> - The Goldsmiths Access Programme Scholarship page explains an award of £1,000 per year to support students entering undergraduate study via an Access to Higher Education course. It states up to 15 scholarships are available for the 2025 intake, outlines eligibility — being enrolled on or having recently completed an Access programme, holding a Goldsmiths undergraduate offer and qualifying for Home fees — and confirms applications open in August. The page details the competitive selection process, renewal conditions, and how awards are administered by the scholarships coordinator, plus contact information. It frames the scholarship as part of Goldsmiths’ widening participation activity.
5. <https://www.gold.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships/goldsmiths-equity-awards/> - Goldsmiths’ Equity Awards page describes a scholarship programme designed to support Black, Asian and minority ethnic students. It states awards are worth £3,000 per year and that funding is provided by alumni and donors; the page notes up to 30 awards may be available for 2025 entrants. Eligibility requires Home fee status and membership of specified ethnic groups, with household income thresholds and priority criteria including three‑year Lewisham residency, low‑participation neighbourhoods, care‑experienced status, free school meals or being estranged. The programme also offers pastoral and academic support in addition to financial aid, aiming to reduce awarding gaps and improve student outcomes.
6. <https://www.gold.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships-list-for-fb/> - The Goldsmiths scholarships listing page summarises a wide range of financial support options and includes specific schemes referenced in the article. It highlights the Lewisham Borough Fee Waiver for local undergraduates with household incomes under specified thresholds, mentions New Cross Fire bursaries provided with Lewisham Council’s support to commemorate the 1981 tragedy, and describes travel bursaries for eligible home students to cover commuting costs. The page lists other targeted awards, links to full regulations, application dates and contact details, and situates these initiatives within Goldsmiths’ broader commitment to widening participation and local community support, with guidance on eligibility and deadlines.
7. <https://www.gold.ac.uk/accommodation/digital-accommodation-guide/> - Goldsmiths’ digital accommodation guide provides detailed weekly rent schedules and hall descriptions for 2025–26, enabling calculation of total fees on standard 42‑week contracts. It lists Surrey House weekly rents from £183 to £387 and Town Hall Camberwell weekly rents from £230 to £408.50, alongside facility details, inclusions such as utilities and wifi, and information on studio and en‑suite options. The guide explains application procedures, management partners for privately run halls, and notes refurbishment and accessibility information. By presenting weekly rates it allows prospective students to estimate total annual accommodation costs comparable with the figures cited in the article for budgeting.