

Disability Inclusion Partnerships Project Summary: Overcoming Barriers to Achieving Inclusive University Objectives in Uzbekistan

University of Westminster & Westminster International University in Tashkent

Project Duration: May 2025 – April 2026

Overview

This project, supported by the British Council's Disability Inclusion Partnerships programme, aims to identify, address and remove barriers to inclusive higher education in Uzbekistan. It builds upon the 2022 'Inclusive University Initiative' and aligns with national strategies, aiming to improve access for underrepresented groups, particularly students with disabilities.

The collaboration between the University of Westminster (UoW) and Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) will plan and deliver their initiative to five cluster universities in Uzbekistan. Findings will be used to guide the sector toward an inclusive educational model rooted in equity and the social model of disability.

Project aims

- To document existing barriers to disability-inclusive education in higher education (HE) in Uzbekistan.
- Engage key stakeholders to co-develop strategies for removing these barriers.
- Produce a practical, accessible report of findings and recommendations.
- Build long-term capacity in inclusive research and institutional change within Uzbekistan's higher education sector.

Methodology

The survey will include several elements, starting with the development and piloting of a **digitally accessible survey**, designed to collect data from colleagues working across various roles in higher education (including management, academic, professional services and support workers). This will be piloted at the five cluster universities.

Next, a series of **focus groups** will be conducted to facilitate inclusive discussions within the cluster institutions, to enable a deeper understanding of the survey findings.

An **interim report** will be produced, disseminated and discussed at an in-person workshop, facilitating review and inclusion of updates in a final report.

Throughout the project, regular meetings will be held by the partners, including stakeholders and cluster institutions, facilitating **wider dissemination** of our findings through conferences and webinars.

Key activities and milestones

Period	Activities
May–Aug 2025	Survey development, literature review, stakeholder engagement
Sep–Oct 2025	National survey dissemination and data collection
Nov 2025	Focus groups and interim report writing
Jan 2026	Stakeholder workshop in Tashkent
Mar 2026	Drafting of the final report
Apr 2026	Publication of the final report
May–Jun 2026	Online launch and review of the project legacy and future steps

Planned outputs and outcomes

Final report: Overcoming barriers to achieving inclusive university objectives in Uzbekistan (April 2026)

Good practice case studies: Derived from pilot implementations.

Dissemination events:

- Workshop in Tashkent (January 2026)
- Online Launch (May/June 2026)

Long-term impact: Our goal is to ensure the long-term impact of this work using various means, including:

- Capacity building (design of stakeholder training, e.g., digital accessibility courses).
- Ongoing student and staff mobility (continued audit, evaluation and adaptation/improvement of accessibility actions).
- Future research projects (motivated by our learning and successes in this project, we aspire to gain external funding to extend the benefits realised through longer-term collaborative initiatives).

Stakeholder engagement

Our goal is to include stakeholders who stand to benefit from increasing the accessibility of higher education in Uzbekistan, from the admission of more students to their employment as graduates. To enable this, we will invite contributions from stakeholders including:

- The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovations (MHESI).
- Non-Government Organisations: e.g., Association of Disabled People of Uzbekistan, Sharoit Plus, Umnichka.
- Partner universities and education bodies across Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

Key project meeting dates

Milestone	Date
In-person workshop	January 2026
Online launch	May/June 2026