

## East Surrey College (10002130)

### Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-29 Access and Participation Plan

#### What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans outline the strategies universities and colleges will employ to enhance equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups. These plans aim to improve access, success, and progression in higher education for these groups. You can view the complete access and participation plan for East Surrey College by clicking on the link: [East-Surrey-College-Access-and-Participation-Plan-2025-26-to-2028-29.pdf](#)

#### Key Points

East Surrey College is a further education institution serving the eastern half of Surrey, as well as the southern region of Croydon and the northern part of West Sussex. The College operates on two campuses: East Surrey College, located north of Redhill, and John Ruskin College in South Croydon.

Our university-level courses range from Higher National Certificates and Diplomas to Foundation and Honours Degrees. We also offer a substantial and growing number of Higher and Degree Apprenticeships, as well as Higher Professional courses. Our internal enrolment data shows from 2023-2024:

- 60% were part-time students
- 36% were mature learners (over 21 years of age) studying higher level qualifications
- 8% were from a BAME (Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic) group
- 16% had declared a disability or identified learning support needs
- 21% were from a POLAR4 Q1 (8%) or POLAR4 Q2 (13%)

Due to the relatively small scale of our higher education programs, official data may not always provide a comprehensive assessment of performance. Therefore, we have been working on enhancing our internal data for attainment (the actual grades that students receive) and progression (student destinations). This effort enables us to identify gaps and set targets in our 2025-26 plan.

Nevertheless, there are some clear areas where we are already trying to improve performance:

- Full time black students are underrepresented
- All students from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 are underrepresented
- The College needs to maintain its proportion of students with disabilities
- The continuation rate for all BAME students is below that of white students
- The continuation rate for part-time mature students is below that of part-time young students
- The percentage of full-time mature students progressing to higher level study or highly skilled employment is below that of full-time young students

#### Fees We Charge

In 2024-25, the maximum fee for our full-time higher education programmes was £8,116 per annum, and for our part time higher education programmes it was £3,267 per annum. Subject to the maximum fee limits (currently £9,250) we may increase fees each year for inflation using the Retail Price Index.

Details of our annual fee information can be found here by clicking on the: [East-Surrey-College-Access-and-Participation-Plan-2025-26-to-2028-29.pdf](#)

#### Financial Help Available

We have allocated financial support in order to both attract and retain students from low participation postcodes (POLAR4 Q1, the lowest 20% of participation), Our current performance is significantly below expectations and we believe that this financial support, coupled with increased external outreach activities that focus on the funding of college degree-level study, will help break down worries amongst many potential students around financial risk.

We provide a phased (two payments, in December and March) funding payment of up to £1000 for all eligible higher education students. To be eligible for the funding, students must:

- Be on the first year of a higher national, foundation degree, Honours degree, or Level 6 top up programme that is charging above the basic fee (£6165 per annum in 2024-25):
- Be in receipt of the maximum statutory maintenance loan
- Have a household income of below £25,000
- Be resident in a POLAR4 Q1 postcode (i.e. their home address when applying)
- Have not received money from this scheme before

### **Information for Students**

We publish all fees for our higher education courses on our website for both new and continuing students and students are made aware of the fees they will be charged for the duration of their course. All suitable applicants are interviewed and there is an opportunity to discuss fees and financial support at interview, along with any other concerns around accessing higher education.

### **What We Are Aiming to Achieve**

#### **Access (applicants who enrol):**

- To increase the proportion of all students with a declared disability to 15% or above from 13.8% by 2028-29.
- To increase the percentage of all students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 to 30% from 13.5% by 2028-29.
- To increase the proportion of full-time Black students to 8% or above from 3.4% by 2028-29.
- To collect Access data on students from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller and refugee communities, and carers and care leavers from enrolment September 2025 onwards.

#### **Success (performance on the course):**

- To remove the non-continuation (starters on Year 1 who do not progress onto Year 2) gap for all BAME students in comparison to white students by 2028/29.
- To narrow the non-continuation gap for part time mature students in comparison to part time young students by 2028/29.
- To collect success data on care leaver students beginning from Exam Boards in July to September 2025 onwards
- To explore the possibility of developing a system for the collection of internal attainment data on all groups from Summer 2025 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in grade performance for target groups

#### **Progression (outcomes after the course):**

- To close the progression gap (those going into higher level study or highly skilled employment) between full time mature students and their young peers to 20% by 2028/29.
- To develop a system for the collection of internal progression data on all groups from Summer 2025 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in performance for target groups

### **What We Are Doing to Achieve Our Aims**

As previously mentioned, we will provide financial support to attract and retain students from the lowest participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1). An allocation has been dedicated to outreach and progression activities, aimed at supporting the College's Marketing and School's Liaison teams and enhancing the advice and guidance provided to higher education students seeking to progress to postgraduate study or professional employment.

Additionally, a further allocation has been made to strategies aimed at increasing student success, particularly for those who face personal or academic challenges in completing their programmes.

Regarding new priorities, we collaborate with a significant number of partner schools. Despite our relatively small higher education provision, we will explore ways to incorporate attainment-raising initiatives into these relationships in our 2025/26 plan. Our current plan details how access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups leads to successful participation and progression. We have been enhancing our internal data to fully evidence this across the student lifecycle, addressing gaps in official data.

Finally, we have established comprehensive pathways into and through higher education, with substantial Level 4 and 5 provision, as well as thriving higher and degree apprenticeship programmes. We continue to work with university partners on further developments in these areas, which will be outlined in our 2025-26 plan.

### **How Students Can Get Involved**

Higher education students from diverse backgrounds participate in focus groups to contribute to the development of the plan. This plan is also shared with student governors and the student union and is presented at the College HE Board, the primary university-level committee at the College, which includes student representation. Students are consulted on all aspects of the plan, including activities, targets, fund distribution, and the approach to awarding financial support.

Senior higher education student representatives are invited to the College HE Board and HE Performance Reviews, which are termly quality reviews with Governors. During these meetings, the plan is monitored, activities are continuously improved, and targets are set based on new data.

### **Evaluation – How We Will Measure What We Have Achieved**

**Financial Support:** Starting from autumn 2025, we will measure the impact of financial support on the success of individual recipients, specifically focusing on the continuation rate from Year 1 to Year 2.

**Outreach:** Activities targeting specific groups are regularly reviewed for their impact. Research is conducted among these target groups to identify the most effective approaches and to refine our outreach strategy.

**Success:** The effectiveness of measures to improve continuation rates is presented for review and adaptation in the Higher Education Self-Evaluation Action Plan, produced each autumn. This document highlights actions to improve performance across various aspects of our higher education programs. We are developing internal attainment data, which will allow us to identify gaps and set targets in our 2025-26 plan.

**Progression:** We have identified only one progression gap from official data and are working to develop a comprehensive method for collecting progression data. Without identifying gaps, it is challenging to implement interventions or measure progress.

Our evaluation strategy is reviewed through the following mechanisms:

- The annual Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document and Action Plan, where continuation rates and student body profiles are reviewed.

- The College HE Board, which reviews marketing and outreach activities, NSS, and internal student surveys, with a focus on progression and programme development.
- Marketing Performance Reviews, which assess marketing and school activities.
- Higher Education Performance Reviews, which evaluate HE recruitment, curriculum performance, and program development.
- The Equality Forum, which monitors performance differences and associated gaps.

**Contact Details for Further Information:** If you would like to discuss any aspect of higher education access and participation at the College, please contact Seidu Salifu, HE Quality and Development Lead, at [ssalifu@esc.ac.uk](mailto:ssalifu@esc.ac.uk)