

Provider name : East Surrey College

UKPRN: 10002130



Access and participation plan 2025-26 to 2028-29

Summary

This Access and Participation Plan (APP) sets out how East Surrey College plans to (a) widen access to Higher Education for students from underrepresented groups, (b) support such students whilst on the programme, and (c) on leaving programme. The college has a very small proportion of Higher Education students with less than undergraduate 40 full-time students and the majority is made up of HNC and HND Engineering and Construction part-time students.

The agreement has been developed by the College's Equality Scheme and Objectives are designed to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Regular monitoring of the APP will be undertaken by the College Higher Education Board, which includes student membership. East Surrey College will spend 25% of the tuition fee income above the basic fee on Access, Success, and Progression Measures. (Access and Participation Fund).

College Overview

East Surrey College is a general further education college serving the Eastern half of Surrey, as well as to the South of Croydon and the North of West Sussex. It is based on one campus: at Gatton Point to the north of Redhill. East Surrey College was founded as a technical college and has delivered vocationally orientated higher education (HE) programmes for many years and foundation degrees since 2008. The College's main prescribed higher education portfolio primarily serves the local area and local demand for skills, specifically in early years education, business & management, design & media, software development, electrical & electronic engineering, and construction.

The College firmly locates higher education, both prescribed and non-prescribed, at the core of its mission. It is inextricably linked and continuous with its other provision, specifically, further education, and employer engagement, along with vocational support for local sixth form provision. Higher education is central to the College's aim to widen participation and support local communities through enabling economic prosperity and social inclusion. This is reflected in the College's Strategic Aim 3: "To develop complementary partnerships to widen opportunities and increase participation."

We are a diverse college that respects and celebrates differences in race, disability, gender, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith and religious beliefs, background, or personal circumstance. We want everyone to feel valued and included in the college community and to achieve their full potential.

The College respects its diverse population and celebrates differences in 'race' disability, gender identity, age sexual orientation, faith, and religious beliefs background, or personal circumstance. The College wants everyone to feel valued and included in the college community and to achieve their full potential.

This document sets out how the College intends to widen access and increase participation in higher education and support students' success and progression from 2025-2026 to 2028-2029.

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Risks to equality of opportunity

Risk 1: Only 8% of students from the POLAR 4 Q1 & 2 and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintile 1 & 2 access higher education at the College. Evidence suggests this is due to factors such as limited knowledge and skills, inadequate access to information and guidance, perceptions of higher education, and the types of available courses.

Risk 2: The proportion of BAME students accessing higher education at the College is low, at 8%. Evidence indicates that this may be attributed to insufficient access to information and guidance, perceptions of higher education, and the types and delivery modes of available courses.

Risk 3: Less than 16% of students with a reported disability achieve degree outcomes of 2:1 or better, and for Higher National Diplomas (HNDs), merit or above, compared to students without reported disabilities. Evidence suggests that this disparity may be due to inadequate access to academic and personal support, as well as financial pressures associated with higher education.

Risk 4: Our data shows that only 6% of students in Construction and Engineering programmes at the College are female. Notably, there are no female students from the BAME community enrolled in these STEM programmes. Active promotion is necessary to increase access to higher education for female students, particularly those from the BAME community.

Objectives

Objective 1: The College plans to increase the proportion of students from POLAR 4 and IMD Quintile 1 from 8% in 2023/24 to 10% by 2028/29 of its total HE population. The College will actively promote access, continuation, and attainment.

Objective 2: The College will increase the proportion of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students accessing higher education at the College University Centre from 8% in 2023/24 to 10% by 2028/29.

Objective 3: The College will enhance the attainment of students with reported disabilities, aiming for them to achieve a 2:1 degree classification or higher by 2028/29. This will include those doing Higher National Certificates and Diplomas who are the majority of our students to attain Merits or Higher.

Objective 4: The College will increase the proportion of female students accessing higher education at the College University Centre from 6% in 2023/24 to 8% by 2028/29.



Intervention strategies and expected outcomes

Intervention Strategy 1: Objectives and targets

The College aims to enhance the representation of students from POLAR 4 Q1 & 2 and IMD Quintile 1&2, by increasing their proportion from 8% in the 2023/24 academic year to 10% by the 2028/29 academic year within its total higher education population.

This intervention includes activities related to school and community group interaction. Activities will be aimed at increasing both skills and knowledge and providing information and guidance that will impact perceptions of higher education. The College already undertakes general activity in this area through school visits, open events, and taster sessions, however, this will include targeted invitations and content.

Degree programme development and revalidation activity will directly impact Objective 1 also this is not targeted, and it is not outlined intervention Strategy 1 to avoid replication.

Risks to equality of opportunity

Consultation with staff and students and consideration of current practice against the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register identified knowledge and skills (Risk 1), access to information and guidance (Risk 2), perception of higher education (Risk 3), and the course options and mode of study (Risk 5) as potential risks. Cost pressures (Risk 10) were also considered.

This section identifies the risks to equality of opportunity that the intervention strategy will address.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention strategy?
<p>Marketing activity and IAG tailored to students from low-income households who reside in postcodes that fall within the POLAR 4 and Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Quintile 1-2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of targeted marketing 	<p>Marketing Officer hours to focus on HE marketing specifically.</p> <p>Proportion of marketing budget realised for marketing of HE provision.</p>	<p>Increased enquiries from potential applicants eligible for POLAR 4 and IDM Q1 & 2</p> <p>Increase HE applications from applicants eligible for POLAR 4 and IDM Q1 & 2</p>	<p>Indicate if the activity will contribute to other intervention strategies.</p>



<p>materials and open events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Open Events – 1 per year • Career Advisor Event twice yearly <p>EORR Risk 2 and Risk 3</p>	<p>Careers Advisor events specifically focused for HE.</p>		
<p>Aspiration-raising activity targeted at schools with a high proportion of POLAR 4 and IDM Q1 & 2 students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 Minute bespoke aspiration-raising sessions once a term with partner schools initially starting with the high school age group. • Continue working with careers and partner schools to include 1 activity per year targeted at aspiration raising for POLAR4 and IDM Q1-2 applicants. <p>EORR Risk 1, 2 and 3</p>	<p>Marketing Officer hours</p> <p>HE teaching team support</p>	<p>Increase intention to progress to higher education.</p> <p>The longer-term impact on applications and enquiries to study higher education.</p>	



<p>Financial support for students from POLAR 4 and IDM Q 1 & 2</p> <p>Further promote low household income bursary</p> <p>EORR Risk 3, Risk 10</p>	<p>Bursary administration</p>	<p>Increase enquiries from potential applicants from POLAR 4 and IMD Q1 & 2</p> <p>Increase applications from applicants from IMD Q1 & 2</p>	
<p>Programme development and revalidation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the development and implementation of new HTQ in Teaching Assistants • HNC and HND for Health and Social Care • Validating FT, PT and hybrid options <p>EORR Risk 5</p>	<p>HE staff team-development.</p> <p>Validation and revalidation costs</p>	<p>Increase enquires from potential applicants eligible for POLAR 4 and IMD Q1 & 2</p> <p>Increase applications from applicants eligible for POLAR 4 and IMD Q 1 & 2</p> <p>Increase enquiries and applicants from mature students</p>	

The total cost of activities and evaluation for intervention strategy:

Summary of evidence base and rationale: The Transforming Access and Students Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO) Toolkit 2023) and research around access to higher education for students eligible for free school meals were explored to access current practice and identify further and enhanced activity. According to Ainscow (2016), equity needs to be concerned with inclusion and fairness and this is the guiding principle in the College’s approach to the process of strengthening the capacity of an educational system that reaches out to all learners in the community with the aim of bring about a just society from the position that education is a fundamental human right and opportunities should be created for all to access it.

Pre-entry Initial Advice and Guidance (IAG) aspiration raising, and study and soft skill support are common activities to increase access, although it is noted that these are more effective when targeted, delivered early, and linked to other activities (TASO 2023). Financial support is also



common but can contain stigma when purely means-tested resulting in enhancing the current progression bursary rather than introducing new bursary options. In addition, changes to the mode of delivery and programme options available to all programmes and introduce blended learning to increase accessibility further and build on post-COVID good practices. This intervention strategy is based on Type 2 Type 1 evidence.

Evaluation

The intervention strategy will be evaluated as a whole, based on monitoring and enquiry and application numbers of students eligible for free school meals, attendance at targeted events, and stakeholder satisfaction related to events. This is predominantly type 2 evidence, linking activity with improved outcomes as causal relationships are difficult evidence in these areas as shown in the TASO toolkit, and the activity mainly relates to targeting current practice. The impact will be reported annually through the Access and Participation Working Group, exploring impact as a whole and for individual activities and this will be published on the Orbital South Colleges Access and Participation Working Group website.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. empirical (Type 2).	Summary of publication plan When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take.
Marketing activity and IAG	Increased enquiry and application from POLAR 4 and IDM Q1 & 2 applicants	Type 2 Monitoring of enquiry and application rates from POLAR 4 and IMD Q1 and 2 Type 1 attendance figures for events	Internal reporting through Access and Participation Working Group
Aspiration rating activity	Increased intention to progress to higher education	Type 1 narrative supported by research	
Knowledge and skills development activity	'Good' or 'excellent' student and staff event satisfaction rates. Increased knowledge and skills to support application to higher education	Type–staff and student surveys measuring satisfaction and self-reported impact	

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	and raise aspirations.		
Finance supported	Increased enquiry and application from POLAR 4 and IMD Q1 & 2	Type 2 – Monitoring of enquiry and application rates from POLAR 4 and IMD Q1 & 2	
Programme development	Increase enquiry and application from POLAR 4 and IMD Q1 & 2	Type 2 Monitoring of enquiry and application rates from POLAR 4 and IMD Q1 and 2	

More detailed information on evaluation can also be provided in the Evaluation section or at Appendix A. Theory of Change Approach

Intervention Strategy 2: Objectives and targets

The College is committed to increasing the proportion of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students enrolled in higher education at the College University Centre from 8% in the 2023/24 academic year to 10% by the 2028/29 academic year.

The College recruits well to the FE programmes from the BAME populations in and around Crawley and Croydon areas and in virtue of this sees the potential to build further on this already positive performance in the future. Although the college recruits heavily from a local demographic, BAME students do not progress to its HE programmes.

Some of the activities below are like those outlined in Intervention Strategy 1, however, where a targeted approach is taken this is noted as a separate activity. The programme development activity outlined in Intervention Strategy 1 is aimed at this objective also, this has not been outlined below to avoid replication, however, it is included in the evaluation activity separately.

Risks to equality and opportunity

Consultation with staff and students and consideration of current practice against the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register identified knowledge and skills (Risk 1) access to information and guidance (Risk 2), perception of higher education (Risk 3), and course options and mode of study (Risk 5) as potential risks. Cost pressures (Risk 10) were also considered. The College has been building good links with the BAME community through previous access and participation activity, this will be enhanced further through a close working relationship with a BAME community group outlined below. It must be emphasised that one of the campuses of Orbital South Colleges, John Ruskin College, has 26% BAME population in its postcode.



Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention strategy?
<p>Marketing activity tailored to BAME students to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of targeted marketing materials • Targeted open events once a year • Advertising campaign • Career advisor event <p>EORR Risk 2 and Risk 3</p>	<p>Marketing Officer hours to focus on HE marketing specifically.</p> <p>Proportion of marketing budget realised for marketing of HE provision.</p> <p>Career advisor events focused on the marketing of HE.</p>	<p>Increase enquiries from potential BAME applicants</p> <p>Increase applications from BAME applicants</p>	
<p>Aspiration-raising activity targeted at BAME community group consisting of children 5 - 16 in the local area.</p> <p>Continue the activity with school partners to include aspiration-raising activity per year.</p> <p>EORR Risk 2 and 3</p>	<p>Marketing officer hours</p> <p>HE teaching Team support</p>	<p>Increased intention to progress to higher education.</p> <p>Long-term impact applications and enquiries for higher education</p>	



<p>Knowledge and skills development activity – targeted towards schools and community groups with high proportions of BAME students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted invite for annual events • Continue activity with School partners to include activity per year targeted knowledge and skills-raising aspirations for BAME students. <p>EORR Risk 1, 2 and 3</p>	<p>Marketing officer hours</p> <p>HE teaching Team support</p>	<p>Good stakeholder event satisfaction rates</p> <p>Increased knowledge and skills support application to higher education and raise aspirations.</p> <p>Longer-term impact on applications for higher education</p>	
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Evidence base and rationale for Pre-entry IAG, aspiration raising, and study and soft skill support are common activities to increase access, although it is noted that these are more effective when targeted, delivered early, and linked to other activities (TASO 2023). Much of the rationale for activity related to this objective is outlined in Intervention Strategy 1, to target this towards the BAME community. The introduction of flexible modes of study is aimed at increasing BAME access as suggested by research, that the community is more likely to want to study close to home (McCabe, Keast, and Kaya, 2022) and require choice and flexibility to do so. As noted by impeded by white-centric discourses. The targeted marketing materials are aimed to remove this discourse and provide information relevant to the unique barriers faced by these under-represented students. This intervention is based on Type 1 evidence.

These intervention strategies will be evaluated as a whole based on monitoring enquiry and application numbers for BAME students, attendance at targeted events, and stakeholder satisfaction related to events. This is predominantly Type 2 evidence linking activity with improved outcomes as causal relationships are difficult to evidence in this area as shown in the TASO Toolkit, and the activity mainly relates to targeting or enhancing current practices. The impact will be reported annually through the Access and Participation Working Group, exploring impact as a whole and for individual activities and this will be published on the Orbital South University Centre Access and Participation Working Group.



Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation Include type of evidence you intend to generate e.g. empirical (Type 2).	Summary of the publication plan When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take.
Marketing activity and IAG	Increased enquiry and application from applicants eligible for BAME	Type 2 Monitoring of enquiry and application rates for BAME students Type 1 attendance figures for events	Internal reporting through the College Higher Education Board Published on Access and Participation on the College website
Aspiration rating activity	Increased intention to progress to higher education	Type 1 narrative supported by research	
Knowledge and skills development activity	Good student and staff event satisfaction rates Increased knowledge and skills to support application to higher education and raise aspirations	Type 2 stakeholder student surveys measuring satisfaction and self-reported impact	Internal College Action plan
Finance supported	Increased enquiry and application from BAME applicants	Type 2 – Monitoring of enquiry and application rates from BAME students	
Programme development	Increase enquiry and application from BAME applicants	Type 2 Monitoring of enquiry and application rates from BAME	Internal College Action plan



Intervention Strategy 3: Objectives and targets

The College aims to ensure that 85% of students with reported disabilities achieve (attain) a 2:1 or higher by the 2028/29 academic year and those studying for HNC/D to get Merit or Higher.

Activity within this objective is likely to contribute to increased attainment of all students identified in the Risk of Opportunity Register attainment for deprived students' characteristics overlap. The attainment sessions and HE Hub support noted in Objective 1 will also be available to students with a reported disability as a result of intersectionality.

Risk to equality of opportunity.

Consultation with staff and students and consideration of current practices against the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register identified academic and personal support (Risk 6 and 7) and cost pressures (Risk 10) as potential impacts on continuation for students with reported disability. The cost pressures for students with a reported disability are impacted by bursaries available to Objective 3 and through enhanced support for claiming DSA as outlined here.

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention strategy?
Enhanced support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable Adjustment plans Pre-DSA support sessions 6 sessions per student EORR Risk 6 and 7	Professional Support Staff Evaluation research project	Faster access to financial support for students with a reported disability- reduction of cost pressure. Increased aspiration to attain a 2:1 or above. Increased attainment for targeted students	Objective 3
Attainment, career, and employability activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of targeted resources 	Resource development Professional Support Staff	Increased aspiration to attain a 2:1 or above. Increased attainment for targeted students.	Objective 3



<p>for employability with a reported disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted career drop-in sessions -5 per year 			
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Intervention Strategy 4: Objectives and targets

The College aims to increase the proportion of female students in construction and engineering at the College University Centre from 6% in the 2023/24 academic year to 8% by the 2028/29 academic year. This target is intended to balance the gender ratio in the Engineering and Construction programmes within the College's Higher Education provision. The significant disparity in our data over the years highlights the need for focused attention in our five-year plan.

The activity in this intervention strategy includes financial, academic, and personal support for students that are considered 'at risk', this will include a high proportion of POLAR 4 Q1 students, and IDM Q1& 2 students and will therefore also support Objective 1 related to attainment for deprived students and will potentially aid recruitment for lower-income student groups, supporting objective 1, 2, and 3.

Risks to equal opportunity

Consultation with staff and students and consideration of current practices against the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR) identified academic and personal support (Risk 6 and 7) and cost pressures (Risk 10) as potential impacts on continuation for students eligible for free school meals. Whilst mental health (Risk 8) was also considered, it is noted that high levels of support provided in the area already reduce the potential impact significantly. Capacity issues were also considered to cultural and traditional attitudes towards certain careers as male (Construction and Engineering or female-dominated (childcare)).

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross-intervention strategy?
Financial support for low-income students	HE Bursary Hardship Fund	Reduced non-continuation as a result of financial pressures.	Objective 1 Objective 4



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Bursary- low household income bursary • Hardship Fund <p>EORR Risk 7 and Risk 10</p>	<p>Administration</p>		
<p>Academic Skills development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Study Skills drop-in sessions – 15 per year <p>EORR RISK 6</p>	<p>HE Staff Team</p> <p>Resource Development</p>	<p>Reduced non-continuation as a result of confidence over grades</p>	<p>Objective 3</p>
<p>Enhanced personal and pastoral support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional personal tutor sessions for at-risk students – half-termly • Development of the HE Student Hub <p>EORR Risk 7</p>	<p>HE Staff Team</p> <p>Development of HE student Hub</p> <p>Evaluation research project</p>	<p>Reduce non-participation as a result of personal issues.</p>	<p>Objective 4</p>

The Evidence base and rationale: Traditionally female participation in Construction and Engineering is often related to cultural, and financial pressures, confidence in academic ability, and personal circumstances. According to the TASO Toolkit (2023) there is emerging evidence that post-entry financial support has a positive impact on both retention and completion in higher education. There is evidence of causal relationships between packages of personal and academic support and continuation there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a personalised approach helps build feelings of community and a sense of belonging which impact positively on retention (Pedler 2022). Students also confirm that sustained and immediate access to both academic and personal support can increase confidence and reduce consideration of the non-participation of females in Construction and Engineering courses traditionally identified as male. This intervention strategy is based on Type 2 and Type 1 evidence.



Evaluation

This intervention strategy will be evaluated as a whole through monitoring progression of female students from FE programmes into HE. Currently, information related to type 1 evaluation however the intention is to move towards type 2 evidence-collecting information in relation to reasons for low applications to construction and engineering. The College will support staff research project exploring the reasons for low participation in these STEM subjects at the University Centre and the impact of current activity with the intention of publication with the aim of producing type 2 evidence.

Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan
Raising the profile in women in STEM subjects	Lead to the increase of applications from females into Construction and Engineering courses	Type 2 evidence in terms of female students' applications and numbers in the Construction and Engineering	When evaluation findings will be shared and the format that they will take.
Financial support	Promote access into HE from college level 3 vocational subjects	Type 2- Monitoring Participation rates and reasons for non-participation	Internal reporting through Access and Participation Working Group.
Enhanced academic study skills support	Reduce non-participation as a result of confidence over grades	Type 2 - Internally supported staff research paper on reasons for non-participation	Published Access and Participation on the college website External dissemination through research paper conference attendance
Enhanced personal and pastoral support	Reduce dropout rates as a result of personal issues	Type 2 internal Self-evaluation document (SED)	Published Access and participation on the College website and internal College Action Plan

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Whole provider approach

As a further education college that delivers, HE, a whole provider approach is built to all the activities that the College undertakes so that a student has the opportunity and support to, in theory, enter that college at a lower level and leave with an HE qualification should they wish to do so. At the University Centre, this approach is the tutorial system, whereby all FE students are allocated a course leader who is responsible for their broader academic development. Tutorials take on many forms but include input on personal development, employability, and aiming for higher-level study. Examples might be CV writing, performing in interviews, and writing UCAS statements. Progress is logged for all learners on an application called EBS OnTrack.

To further support the tutorial system, the college uses a range of methods for its FE students: funding to attend open days and interviews; hosting guest talks from universities; a specialist client services adviser who can support with student finance; class talks by the HE Quality and Development Lead, former College HE students, visits and talks from former students to their former programmes; progression week where focused tutorials and talks take place.

Alignment with Other Strategies and Policies

In terms of Access, the College Admissions Policy clearly states, “The application process and the selection of applicants are conducted in compliance with the College’s Equality Policy for Students and Equality Scheme.” The College acknowledges that although being a care leaver is not a protected characteristic it has additional responsibilities to monitor this group in the context of its HE provisions, which is noted in the Equality Scheme.

The Equality Scheme notes “The Equality Forum has been set up as a steering committee to ensure that the actions contained within the Equality Scheme are undertaken and completed.” Therefore, it is entirely appropriate that this instrument oversees Access targets set in this plan under Equality Objective 3, “to support access to learning for different groups of students”.

The Quality Improvement Policy also aligns well with this plan and has two particularly pertinent aims: “to provide information which supports strategic planning, meets employer requirements for qualified and skilled staff and underpins the achievement of entry requirements for Higher Education; to encourage continuous improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment programmes, thereby making learning an enjoyable activity, increasing student retention and the achievement of individual learning goals in a timely manner”. This is further supported by the Careers Information, Advice and Guidance Strategy.

The College produces an HE Self Evaluation Document (SED) and Action Plan each year which are presented to Governors in November. The Action Plan is reviewed termly at HE Performance Reviews (also with Governors) and at College HE Board which meets every other month. One key focus in the Action Plan on 2024/25 was Success and the need to improve continuation rates.

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Specific actions are: “Year 1 progress tutorials to be monitored for all HE students (Nov/Dec 2025); Directors of Learning to review “at risk” students with HE courses leaders on an ongoing basis and devise bespoke interventions; bursaries to be made available from 2025/26 which has potential to ease any financial issues”. Directors of Learning are required to report on progress around improving continuation rates to the College HE Board. As the SED is focused on Quality Assurance, the College sees the potential to action plan around Progression in the future here too, once the reliable data is obtained and better understood.

Strategic Measures

The College will spend 25% of its higher fee income on Access, Success, and Progression measures. The College will allocate the largest percentage of its Access and Participation Fund (55%) to bursaries primarily to both attract and retain students from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1 & 2), The College’s current performance is significantly below expectations on this indicator and it believes that this financial support, coupled with increased outreach activities that focus on the funding of college degree-level study, will help break down concerns amongst many potential students on the financial risk of pursuing and continuing on an HE qualification.

Financial support has been identified as being attractive to students from a widening participation background as it will offer immediate cash for course materials, travel, and other personal or financial matters that can impact attendance and continuation. This is an effective measure because it supports the addressing of any financial risk around Access for this target group and supports their Success as it makes continuation more likely. As noted below, it is not primarily a useful tool for promoting Access alone however and must be cast as a way to mitigate perceived risk on-programme.

An allocation of 20% of the Access and Participation Fund has been made to outreach (15%) and progression (5%) activities. This is to support the College’s Marketing and Schools’ liaison functions and further improve the advice and guidance given to HE students, including full-time mature students, wishing to progress on to postgraduate study or professional employment. The additional funding will support the cost of delivering additional events, increasing staffing at events, producing information for applicants, and providing support in the College Group for students applying to HE, further, HE studies, and seeking employment. These are effective Access measures because internal and external outreach is crucial in engaging with our target groups. These are effective progression measures because support on-programme with progression is the obvious first step whilst the College begins to collect, and reflect on, data.

25% of the Access and Participation Fund has been allocated to non-financial strategies to increase success in order to help students who encounter either personal circumstances or academic challenges to complete their programme. As a further education college, our HE Offer targets students with a lower UCAS entry profile enabling a large number of people who are not able to study at a higher education institution to achieve a degree-level qualification. This lower entry profile

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attracts a large number of students who experience academic challenges but do not qualify for additional statutory support. By increasing the amount of support available to HE students, the College anticipates that its continuation rates amongst target groups will increase. These are effective Success measures because they can be tailored to individual needs in terms of the interventions required to stay on programme and to continue.

Access Measures

As a Further Education College, we support local young people from all the OfS target groups to aim higher as part of our overall mission, and the majority of the College's resources contribute to this societal aim, albeit outside the scope of this plan.

We plan to spend 15% of the Access and Participation Fund on outreach. The activities will focus, where possible, on the following groups:

- Areas with low participation rates in HE identified by POLAR4 Q1 & Q2, and IMD Q1 & 2 specifically those within the College Group's non-HE population.
- Those eligible for free school meals
- Special Learning Difficulty or Disability (SLDD)
- Care leavers
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities
- In addition, the College seeks to refine its approach where possible to focus on the following groups, once Access data is collected and interpreted:
 - Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities
 - Refugee communities
 - Young Carers

Internal and external outreach activities will comprise the following:

- Work with further education students within the College Group (East Surrey College and John Ruskin College) from POLAR4 Quintile 1 & 2 postcodes at levels 1, 2, and 3 to raise attainment (meeting or exceeding national achievement rates) and provide progression options to internal and external higher education. John Ruskin College, within the group, has a significant representation by Black FE students and is located near POLAR4 Q1 postcodes to the South East of Croydon which aligns well with Access targets.

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- Internal Progression Events at East Surrey College and John Ruskin College, again with the ability to focus on Access for the above groups.
- Internal 1-1 support on researching university-level study and UCAS applications, focused on low participation postcode students, BAME students, and students with disabilities.
- Provision of information advice and guidance, with particular reference to financial support (to our Access target group from low participation postcodes), through attendance at open evening events in local schools/colleges/ careers fairs.
- Use of links with local schools, and holding of events to attract young families, to raise awareness, and provide aspiration and attainment-raising activities.
- Interview of all HE applicants with flexible admissions policies, including the opportunity to resist GCSE English and/or Maths during Year 1, and recognition of prior learning by mature students from industry experience.

Access and Success Measures

The College recognises the evidence established by OFFA (2016) that financial support packages are of questionable utility in purely addressing Access gaps when weighed against their impact in addressing Success gaps. However, for POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1-3 groups, the presence of the support will be one of several factors in making sense of the risk involved in engaging in and succeeding in, higher level study.

The college will spend 55% of the Access and Participation Fund on financial support. Applications will be screened to support Access and Success for POLAR4 Q1 and IMD Q1-3 groups as a current priority although further plans may in the future identify other priorities.

The College will provide a phased (two payments, in December and March) bursary of £1000 for all eligible prescribed higher education students each year. To be eligible for the funding, students must:

- Be in 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 & 2 postcode (i.e. their home address when applying)
- Have not received money from the bursary before.

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Success Measures

In addition to the bursary identified above we plan to spend 25% of the Access and Participation Fund to reduce Success gaps for BAME students and part-time Mature students against their peers. It is not desirable to overtly target all activities at particular target groups with the small cohorts at the College, so an approach has been taken to bolster interventions that support Success more generally. However, monitoring of impact is focused on the target groups. The College's partnership with the University of Chichester has led to a more codified approach to formative assessment, and more self-reflective work in summative assessment.

Planned activities:

- All applicants meeting the minimum entry criteria are interviewed to provide an opportunity to discuss the course and any individual support needs
- Dedicated HE Additional Learner Support (ALS) to be available from the interview stage (if requested) to Induction and 'on programme'
- Study Skills Sessions at Induction and online platform for students
- Additional Study Skills sessions as part of the tutorial timetable and specialist HE Study Support from LRC staff
- Close monitoring of attendance patterns and follow-up of unexplained absences by tutors and managers
- Semester 1 individual tutorials in Year 1 to explore any challenges students are facing
- Availability of student mentors / Health and wellbeing advisors
- Transitional summer activities
- Student Counselling Service
- Internal 1-1 support for students wishing to withdraw from the College career's function
- Further development of the College VLE to support learning.
- Exploration of the feasibility of peer mentoring in a small college

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Progression Measures

Generally, employability and enterprise are embedded into the heavily vocational curriculum, although the majority of full-time students have historically been in Art and Design, and Early Years which do not tend to attract higher-status employment as measured early in their careers by DLHE.

We plan to spend 5% of the Access and Participation Fund on the following Progression activities:

- Internal 1-1 support especially for full-time Mature students researching and applying to top-up/level 6
- Access to online resources/services that support graduate recruitment via the Careers function
- Establishment of significant Level 6 provisions at the College, which will support the Progression of Mature students beyond full-time Mature students, these are not yet targeted as the College needs to obtain a better understanding of any progression gaps. Employability and skills development interventions are also key options here.

Student Consultation

Higher education students from a range of backgrounds took part in class focus groups regarding the development of this APP. These were from cohorts of the basic fee from BSc Quantity Survey, BA Theatrical Make Up, and FdA Early Years Education, HNC/D Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

The APP was also shared with student governors and the student union and was tabled at the College HE Board which has student representation. Revised targets were also tabled at a later College HE Board.

Students were consulted on all aspects of the plan including activities, targets, distribution of funds, and the approach to awarding financial support. Students agreed with the College's approach and affirmed the final determination of how the Access and Participation Fund should be divided. The main imperative for students was that a cash payment was the best means to boost Access and Success.

HE student representatives are invited to College HE Board and HE Performance Reviews where monitoring of this plan (via the Risk Register described above), and the continuous improvement of interventions and the setting of targets on the basis of new data will be discussed.

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Evaluation Strategy

As the aims are all risks to the College in fulfilling its obligations around Access and Participation in HE, an Access and Participation Risk Register has been devised that will assess progress “live” on targets and other key actions on improving data capture. The risk register will draw on an emerging internal Access and Participation dataset which will embed monitoring within the College. A risk register is also appropriate as the College is still learning the evaluation of Access Agreements/Access and Participation Plans, so it is difficult to perform a self-assessment of evaluation prior to this plan being put in action.

The Risk Register is the primary means by which the impact of individual strategic measures will be assessed and will be regularly updated by the HE Quality and Development Lead, in line with adjustments to interventions during the life of this plan. It will be reviewed in HE Performance Reviews and at the College HE Board (approximately seven times per year) where adjustments will be discussed and agreed upon. This will facilitate a continuous improvement of strategic measures as the risk register will be a live document. Review of the risk register will then lead to potential adjustments and alterations in the strategic measures.

Financial Support

The College will provide a phased (two payments, in December and March) bursary of £1000 for all eligible prescribed higher education students each year.

To be eligible for the funding, students must:

- Be in 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 & 2 postcodes (i.e. their home address when applying)
- Have not received money from the bursary before.

The impact of financial support will be assessed by tracking individuals who are in receipt of it across the Access and Success parts of the student lifecycle (including Attainment). This will include qualitative data from the students on the impact it made for them.

In Autumn 2025, the College will be starting to collect data on care leavers and will be able to judge if there is an Access issue emerging. If necessary, care leavers will be added to those prioritised in the financial support package.

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The College will initially measure and assess the “Success” impact, the main impact area of the current 2023/24 financial support in Autumn 2024 to gauge if there are lessons to be learned for the roll-out of this APP. From Autumn 2026, the College will measure the impact of financial support (bursaries) on the Success (i.e. Continuation rates) of individual recipients and consider making adjustments, possibly to the terms of the bursary, if impacts are insufficient. This will continue in subsequent years.

Outreach

Activities that focus on groups within the APP targets will be logged as “mitigations” on the Risk Register and regularly reviewed for impact. Research will be conducted amongst target groups after enrolment in Autumn 2025, and in subsequent years, to assess which approaches might be the most effective and to better understand what refinements might be made to our approach to Outreach.

Success

The College is already aware of the issues raised in this plan and has already put measures in place. The effectiveness of these measures will be first reviewed in Autumn 2025 and will be present for review and adaptation on both the HE SED Action Plan and the Risk Register. This will be an ongoing process as the College continues to refine its approach to reducing gaps in success. There will also be a review of the feasibility of collecting Attainment data internally.

Progression

As stated at various points in this plan, the College will begin to collect Progression data internally from Summer 2025 onwards. If gaps are found, the College will devise interventions to address these gaps and ambitious targets will be set in the Risk Register. Any such targets and actions will be subject to annual review, so the College begins to make progress in addressing any gaps. Reasonable financial support may be considered if this seems to be the most effective option. It seems likely also that employability and skills development interventions might be used, although as all programmes are vocational, these are well embedded already.

Evidence-based approach

Through the risk register, the College is committed to taking a regularly reviewed and adapted evidence-based approach to understanding which interventions are producing impacts and should be continued, or even expanded. The evaluation strategy discussed is clearly new and requires regular review and development itself to maximise effectiveness. Monitoring arrangements are described in this document. Throughout this plan, it will be possible to provide longitudinal data and an account of how interventions have developed and evolved. Any targeted interventions will be discontinued where they do not show a consistent impact on achieving the targets set in this plan, or subsequent targets added to the risk register.

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Monitoring Arrangements

Our evaluation strategy has been detailed in the document and progress will be reviewed through the following mechanisms:

1. The annual Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document and Action Plan (where continuation rates are reviewed along with profiles of the student body) *#
2. The College HE Board (marketing and outreach, NSS, DLHE/GoS, and internal student surveys are reviewed – progression is also a focus along with programme development) #**
3. Marketing Performance Reviews (where Marketing and School activities are reviewed)
4. Higher Education Performance Reviews (where HE recruitment and curriculum performance are reviewed, along with programme development) *#**
5. Equality Forum (where equal access and associated gaps are reported)
 1. * indicates Governing Body representation # indicates HE Student representation
 2. ** indicates review and adjustments to the risk register.
 3. # indicates HE Student representation.

Along with longitudinal analysis of continuation rates, and analysis of student survey results, these groups will review progress on the targets set within this APP and the College HE Board will agree with modifications to the Theory of Change activities and the College's approach to increase access and participation. Quantitative measures of impact are provided above and are annualised in the Target and Investment Plan.

As stated above, the Risk Register will be regularly updated by the HE Quality and Development Lead (who is responsible for coordinating robust monitoring), in line with adjustments to interventions during the life of this plan and will be reviewed in HE Performance Reviews and at College HE Board (2 and 4 above) where in-plan adjustments will be discussed and agreed.

Publication of Information

The College publishes all fees for its own higher education courses on its 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. Should this not be possible for new students/programmes, an indicative fee is provided until the final fee is available and is clearly labelled as such. All suitable applicants are

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interviewed and there is an opportunity to discuss fees and financial support at the interview before enrolment.

Further to this, the College will write to all relevant Level 3 students in the College Group to promote the bursary element that would support them if they progressed to HE, supported by website banners and physical posters on campus. This information is also made available on the HE pages of the College website and will include details of eligibility criteria and the level, duration, and nature of this support.

The College undertakes to publish all active APPs on its website and will ensure that details of financial support are extracted from the most recent APP and are made available on a relevant higher education page on its website.

Appendices

- **A. Theory of Change Approach**
- **B. Targets and Investment Summary**



Appendix A Theory of Change Approach

EXAMPLE INPUTS	EXAMPLE OUTPUTS	REACH	AIMS	IMPACTS	GOALS
Appropriate targeting of Level 3 progression candidates with mental health, learning or developmental difficulties by Level 3 course leaders.	Students who would sometimes struggle in large classes at university can continue to thrive with the tutors they know and trust.	Applicants and their advisers.	To increase the proportion of students with a declared disability to 15% (headcount) or above from 13.8%.	Diverse student population offering local opportunities in a fully accessible site and supportive FE setting.	Improved Access
Identify and target POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 FE students at the College Group and work with the two relevant NCOPs (and their partners) to leverage bespoke or group support in aiming higher.	More POLAR4 Q1 FE students applying to university, internally to HE or for higher professional courses or apprenticeships.	Applicants, local statutory and 3 rd sector organisations, NICOP's.	To increase the percentage of all undergraduate entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1 and Q2) from 13.5% to 30%.	Diverse student population, offering opportunities to those least likely to access higher education.	Improved Access



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EXAMPLE INPUTS	EXAMPLE OUTPUTS	REACH	AIMS	IMPACTS	GOALS
Identify and target Black FE students at the College Group and work with their personal tutors to support them in aiming higher.	More Black students applying to university, internally to HE or for higher professional courses or apprenticeships.	Applicants, local statutory and 3 rd sector organisations.	To increase the percentage of full-time Black students to 8% (headcount) or above from 3.4%.	Diverse student population.	Improved Access
Identify care leavers enrolling on to HE programmes.	Ability to understand Access levels and track performance throughout student lifecycle.	Enrolling students	To collect Access data on care leaver students from enrolment September 2025	Better understanding of performance around a key target group leading to new strategic measures being taken.	Improved Access
Identify other groups known to be at disadvantage in accessing HE in order to be able to	Ability to understand Access levels	Enrolling students	To collect Access data on students from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities, students from refugee	Better understanding of performance around a key target group leading to new	Improved Access



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EXAMPLE INPUTS	EXAMPLE OUTPUTS	REACH	AIMS	IMPACTS	GOALS
track through the student lifecycle.			communities, and carers from enrolment September 2024 onwards.	strategic measures being taken.	
Investigate historical non continuation patterns. Low attendance to be monitored and interventions made. Reviews to be instigated before the December holiday for Year 1s.	Improved understanding of non-continuation dynamics and improved performance.	Year 1 HE students	To remove the non-continuation gap for BAME students overall as compared to White students.	Improve success by removing gap in performance for key target group.	Improved Success
Investigate historical non-continuation patterns. Low attendance is to be monitored and interventions made.	Improved understanding of non-continuation dynamics and improved performance.	Year 1 HE students	To narrow the non-continuation gap for part-time Mature students as compared to part-time Young students.	Improve success by removing gap in performance for key target group.	Improved Success

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EXAMPLE INPUTS	EXAMPLE OUTPUTS	REACH	AIMS	IMPACTS	GOALS
Reviews are to be instigated before the December holiday for Year 1s.					
Identify any Success gaps for care leavers on HE programmes.	Improved understanding of non-continuation dynamics.	Year 1 HE students	To collect Success data on care leaver students from July to September 2024.	Better understanding of performance around a key target group leading to new strategic measures being taken.	Improved Success
Identify any attainment gaps across all groups.	Improved understanding of attainment dynamics across all groups.	HE Quality and Development Lead and Exams Manager/MIS; final year HE Students.	To explore the feasibility of developing a system for the collection of internal Attainment data on all groups from Summer 2024 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in	Understanding of performance.	Improved Success

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EXAMPLE INPUTS	EXAMPLE OUTPUTS	REACH	AIMS	IMPACTS	GOALS
			performance for target groups.		
Identify any Progression gaps for all target groups on HE programmes.	Improved understanding of progression gaps for target groups.	Current HE Students, HE Leavers.	To develop a system for the collection of proxy internal Progression data on all groups from Summer 2024 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in performance for target groups.	Better understanding of performance around all key target groups leading to new strategic measures being taken.	Improved Progression
Support progression by increased Level 6 offer internally and greater IAG around employment and further study.	More full time Mature students progressing to highly skilled employment or higher-level study.	Current HE Students.	To narrow the Progression gap between full time Mature students and their Young peers.	Improve progression by narrowing gap in performance for key target group.	Improved Progression

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: East Surrey College

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Summary of 2025-26 entrant course fees

*course type not listed

Inflation statement:

Subject to the maximum fee limits set out in Regulations we will increase fees each year using RPI-X

Table 3b - Full-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	All Honours Top Up	N/A	8359
Foundation degree	All FdA/FdSc unless otherwise listed	N/A	8359
Foundation degree	Early Years	N/A	6730
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	*	N/A	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 3b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 4b - Part-time course fee levels for 2025-26 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	Quantity Surveying (0.75 FTE)	N/A	6087
Foundation degree	*	N/A	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	N/A	*
HNC/HND	Engineering/Construction	N/A	3267
CertHE/DipHE	*	N/A	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	N/A	*
Accelerated degree	*	N/A	*
Sandwich year	*	N/A	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	N/A	*
Other	*	N/A	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2025-26

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Sub-contractual provider name and additional information:	Sub-contractual UKPRN:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*	*
Foundation degree	*	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*	*
HNC/HND	*	*	*
CertHE/DipHE	*	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Turing Scheme and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Fees, investments and targets

2025-26 to 2028-29

Provider name: East Surrey College

Provider UKPRN: 10002130

Investment summary

A provider is expected to submit information about its forecasted investment to achieve the objectives of its access and participation plan in respect of the following areas: access, financial support and research and evaluation. Note that this does not necessarily represent the total amount spent by a provider in these areas. Table 6b provides a summary of the forecasted investment, across the four academic years covered by the plan, and Table 6d gives a more detailed breakdown.

Notes about the data:

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Yellow shading indicates data that was calculated rather than input directly by the provider.

In Table 6d (under 'Breakdown'):

"Total access investment funded from HFI" refers to income from charging fees above the basic fee limit.

"Total access investment from other funding (as specified)" refers to other funding, including OIS funding (but excluding Uni Connect), other public funding and funding from other sources such as philanthropic giving and private sector sources and/or partners.

Table 6b - Investment summary

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment (£)	NA	£18,000	£20,000	£23,000	£25,000
Financial support (£)	NA	£26,000	£28,000	£30,000	£32,000
Research and evaluation (£)	NA	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000

Table 6d - Investment estimates

Investment estimate (to the nearest £1,000)	Breakdown	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Access activity investment	Pre-16 access activities (£)	£9,000	£10,000	£12,000	£13,000
Access activity investment	Post-16 access activities (£)	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000
Access activity investment	Other access activities (£)	£5,000	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000
Access activity investment	Total access investment (£)	£18,000	£20,000	£23,000	£25,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment (as % of HFI)</i>	<i>52.9%</i>	<i>45.5%</i>	<i>51.1%</i>	<i>54.3%</i>
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment funded from HFI (£)</i>	£12,000	£19,000	£19,000	£20,000
Access activity investment	<i>Total access investment from other funding (as specified) (£)</i>	£2,000	£1,000	£2,000	£2,000
Financial support investment	Bursaries and scholarships (£)	£10,000	£11,000	£12,000	£13,000
Financial support investment	Fee waivers (£)	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
Financial support investment	Hardship funds (£)	£12,000	£13,000	£14,000	£15,000
Financial support investment	Total financial support investment (£)	£26,000	£28,000	£30,000	£32,000
Financial support investment	<i>Total financial support investment (as % of HFI)</i>	<i>76.5%</i>	<i>63.6%</i>	<i>66.7%</i>	<i>69.6%</i>
Research and evaluation investment	Research and evaluation investment (£)	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Research and evaluation investment	<i>Research and evaluation investment (as % of HFI)</i>	<i>2.9%</i>	<i>2.3%</i>	<i>2.2%</i>	<i>2.2%</i>

