



## **THE EAST SURREY COLLEGE CORPORATION**

**(trading as: Orbital South Colleges; John Ruskin College)**

## **HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS & PARTICIPATION PLAN**

**2020/21 to 2024/25**

### **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, and (b) support such students whilst on programme and (c) on leaving programme.

The agreement has been developed in accordance with the College's Equality Scheme and Objectives 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).

## Preface - College Overview

East Surrey College (ESC) 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 two campuses: at Gatton Point to the north of Redhill (which delivers the vast majority of its HE); at John Ruskin College in South Croydon. East Surrey College was originally 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 a local demand for skills, specifically in early years education, management, design and media, software development, electrical and electronic engineering, power engineering, general engineering, and built environment.

The College firmly locates higher level study, 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.

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 4: "To develop complementary partnerships that contribute positively to sustainable communities."

ESC is 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. The College wants everyone to feel valued and included in the College community and to achieve their full potential.

This is East Surrey College's second APP and it sets out how the College intends to widen access to higher education and support student success and progression from 2020/21 to 2024/25. It is the first APP after a merger with John Ruskin College (which had no HE) in February 2019. As this is the second iteration of our APP, there is (a) nothing to report on currently on impacts from 2019/20 and (b) no scope yet to reflect on refinements to our approach in the 2019/20 APP as there are no "established" interventions yet. Access Activity did not commence until Autumn 2019 when some of the higher fee income became available.

### 1. Assessment of Performance

In 2018/19 there were 111 students originally enrolled on prescribed higher education programmes of which 58.6% were full time and 41.4% were part time. The provision ranges from Higher National Certificates and Diplomas to Foundation Degrees. The College also hosts significant and growing numbers of Higher and Degree Apprentices, and Higher Professional courses, which fall outside the scope of this APP. The College is a Partner College of the University of Chichester, a Business Partner of the University for the Creative Arts, and a member of the Sussex Learning Network Uni Connect Programme (formerly NCOP).

Of the College HE population in 2018/19, a snapshot from internal enrolment data reveals:

- 20.7% were 30 and over (64% were over 21)
- 15.3% were from a BAME group
- 7.2% had declared a disability or identified learning support needs
- 10% were from a POLAR4 Q1 (1%) or POLAR24 Q2 (9%) low participation postcode
- The College has historically not collected data on care leavers at HE enrolment

## **Notes on the Use of Data**

In the sections that follow, the College has used an aggregation of two/three years of internal data to support the setting of targets due to small numbers, but even then the use of multiple indicators has proved difficult to achieve in any significance. Where three years of data are used this is from 2016/17-2018/19 and where two years of data have been used this is from 2017/18-2018/19. In addition, the College has used the OfS dataset where numbers are not absent or suppressed to further support the setting of targets. Internal data combines full time and part time students together whereas OfS data disaggregates these.

Progression analysis is based on the OfS dataset, where data is useable, and on progression to highly skilled employment or further study as defined in TEF Year 4 as the College does not have a single source of reliable internal or external data at this stage. It should be noted that TEF data attributes students by teaching rather than registering institution (which are the same at the College), includes international and EU students (of which there are around 2%), and aggregates three years' of data together.

The College generally recruits from its Travel-to-Work area, and regards the local demographic more typical of its realistic target market than the national demographic. TEF Year 4 contextual data indicates that 48% of students were Local (56% full time and 36% part time), with employer-sponsored part time students therefore travelling further to attend.

For Access Data it has generally been possible to consider internal data and the OfS dataset to gain a clear assessment of performance. For Success Data, the focus has been purely on Continuation rather than Achievement, as the College does not run any classified Level 6 programmes (meaning no Achievement data is present in the OfS dataset).

Robust Progression data overall has been extremely difficult to find, both internally and from the OfS dataset. LEO data is beginning to emerge for small numbers, and from the TEF Year 4 data shows the College's students are progressing to above median earning or further study at around the benchmark rate. It is anticipated some discussions herein on Progression may be further refined as the Graduate Outcomes Survey and Longitudinal Employment Outcomes (LEO) data become available in future years.

### **1.1 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Students**

#### **1.1.1 Access**

Aggregated three year internal admissions data (2016/17-2018/19) indicates that 12.7% of the College HE population are from BAME groups. This compares favorably with the Surrey population (9.75%, 2011 Census Data), which is used as a comparison as Colleges generally recruit from their Travel-to-Work area. The reason for this is the College recruits well from the BAME populations in and around the Crawley and Croydon areas and in virtue of this, sees the potential to build further on this already positive performance in the future. National data (HESA, 2018/19) indicates 24% of HE students are from BAME groups, although the College recruits heavily from a local demographic and students do not move to the area to attend its HE programmes.

The OfS dataset indicates that the proportion of BAME students has declined from 23.7% to 16.8% in the last five years for full time programmes, but has similarly increased in the last four years from 2.7% to 15.3% for part time programmes.

When the OfS dataset is disaggregated to BAME subgroups, although numbers become small, for full time students there has been a marked drop in numbers of Black students over five years from 15.8% to 3.4%, and a marked increase in numbers of Asian students from 2.6% to 10.1%. For part time

students over the last four years, there has been a marked increase in numbers of Black students from 0% to 7.7%, and in numbers of Asian students from 0% to 3.8%.

Albeit with small numbers, there are no BAME subgroups that are underrepresented, indeed the College HE population is more diverse than the local population. In the 2011 Census for Surrey the population was made up as follows (with the last year of the College's OfS dataset in brackets): White 90.3% (83.1% FT; 84.6% PT); Mixed 2.1% (2.2% FT; 3.8% PT); Asian 5.6% (10.1% FT; 3.8% PT); Black 1.1% (3.4% FT; 7.7% PT); Other 0.9% (1.1% FT; 0% PT).

The main point of concern is the significant decline in full time Black students which appears to be at the heart of any overall decline in BAME numbers. However, a general shift in BAME students from full time to part time programmes is also apparent, and the College is recruiting increasing numbers of Asian students across all modes of study.

### **1.1.2 Success**

Aggregated two year internal exam board data (2017/18-2018/19) indicates that 31.6% of the College's BAME population do not continue. This compares extremely unfavorably with the White population (13.7%) and there is clear scope to close this substantial gap as quickly as possible.

Although compiled differently (ie benchmarked against other providers), TEF Year 4 data appears to contradict this with full time BAME students showing a positive flag for Continuation. The College sees the gap identified above as a reason to set a target, but TEF4 data does imply that performance might fluctuate quite significantly year-on-year. This is linked to an OfS National Key Performance Measure.

The OfS dataset suppresses Continuation data for all ethnic groups (full time and part time) apart from White so it is impossible to form conclusions from that source, and any interventions should be targeted at all BAME students across both modes of study.

### **1.1.3 Progression**

There is a lack of data externally from DLHE/GOS (due to small numbers), and also internally, to monitor the progression rates of BAME students. Data was suppressed for this group in the TEF Year 4 metrics too for both full time and part time. Data is suppressed in the OfS dataset for Progression by ethnicity. Section 2.2.3 sets out an aim to improve understanding here.

Nationally, full time White students are known to outperform other ethnic groups, with Black students suffering the largest gap, being 4.7% behind White students. The gap is wider for part time students, with Black students 6.5% behind White students and Asian student 7% behind White students. However, the gaps are narrowing for both modes of study.

## **1.2 Students with Disabilities**

### **1.2.1 Access**

Aggregated three year internal admissions data (2016/17-2018/19) indicates that 13.8% of the College HE population declare a disability. This is in line with the Surrey population (13.5%, 2011 Census Data), which is used as a comparison as Colleges generally recruit from their Travel-to-Work area.

The OfS dataset indicates that the proportion of disabled students has declined from an unusually high 29.3% to 12.4% in the last five years for full time programmes, but has similarly increased in the last four years from 2.7% to 15.4% for part time programmes. A greater effort has been made in recent years to persuade employer-sponsored part time students to declare disability as it was noted that

numbers seemed artificially low.

When disability is disaggregated by type, according to the OfS dataset, amongst full time students Cognitive and Learning has fallen from 19.5% to 7.9%, Mental Health has fallen from 2.4% to 1.1%, Sensory, Medical and Physical has risen from 0% to 1.1%, Multiple Impairments has fallen from 4.9% to 0% and Social and Communication has stayed the same at 0%. However, these are typically very small numbers of students and subject to wide fluctuation.

Amongst part time students, Cognitive and Learning has risen from 0% to 3.8%, Mental Health has risen from 0% to 3.8%, Sensory, Medical and Physical has risen from 0% to 3.8%, Multiple Impairments has fallen from 2.7% to 0% and Social and Communication has stayed the same at 0%.

The College sees this as an area where it is performing as expected and therefore should push further for a reasonably ambitious improvement. National data (HESA, 2018/19) indicates 14% of HE students self-declare as having a disability, which the College should aim to exceed.

### **1.2.2 Success**

Aggregated two year internal exam board data (2017/18-2018/19) indicates that 26.5% of the College's HE population with a declared disability do not continue. This compares unfavorably with the non-disabled population (15%). However, the OfS dataset indicates that for full time students, in the last three years the continuation rate for non-disabled students has fallen from 85.2% to 72.6% whereas for disabled students the continuation rate has risen from 76.9% to 81.3%. The OfS dataset suppresses data for part time students, and when disaggregated by disability type.

Albeit with data created for a different purpose (ie benchmarked against other providers), TEF Year 4 data on continuation supports the OfS dataset with full time students with disabilities showing no negative flag. The College sees the gap identified above in internal data as a reason to monitor this area closely but not set a target at this stage. This is linked to an OfS National Key Performance Measure.

### **1.2.3 Progression**

There is a lack of data externally from DLHE/GOS (due to small numbers), and also internally, to monitor the progression rates of students with disabilities.

Data was suppressed for this group in the TEF Year 4 metrics for part time students, but showed no negative flags for full time students (this is benchmarked against other providers and is not a reflection of a lack of an absolute gap at the College). Data is suppressed in the OfS dataset for Progression by disability. Section 2.2.3 sets out an aim to improve understanding here.

Nationally, it is known that the significant gap (currently 7.7%) has widened further (by 1.4% in the last 5 years) for part time Disabled students against their non-disabled peers. The gap for full time Disabled students is much lower at 1.8% but could be described as persistent.

## **1.3 Mature Students**

### **1.3.1 Access**

Aggregated three year internal admissions data (2016/17-2018/19) indicates that 67.1% of the College HE population are over 21, with 20.3% being over 30. This is clearly a very strong performance and such inclusivity of access is something that the College seeks to maintain, largely through the subject and delivery mode of the programmes it offers.

The OfS dataset backs this up, indicating that the proportion of full time young students has dropped from 63.4% to 55.1% over the last five years, whilst the proportion of mature full time students has increased from 36.6% to 44.9%. For part time students, the proportion of young students has risen from a very low 27% to 34.6% over the last four years, whilst their mature peers have fallen from 73% to 65.4%. National data (HESA, 2018/19) indicates only 26% of HE students are over 21.

The College does not see the need to set a target in this area as it is already making a valuable contribution to the national access picture for mature students.

### **1.3.2 Success**

Aggregated two year internal exam board data (2017/18-2018/19) indicates that only 8.6% of the College's HE population over 25 do not continue. The OfS dataset indicates that for full time students, in the last four years the continuation rate for young students has fallen from 84.6% to 70% whereas for mature students the continuation rate has risen from 73.3% to 78.9%. The OfS dataset suppresses data for part time students except for the most recent year where a small number of young students show a rate of 92.9% and the majority number of mature students show a rate of 78.9%. This is a clear gap nevertheless.

### **1.3.3 Progression**

There is a lack of data externally from DLHE (due to small numbers), and also internally, to monitor the progression rates of mature students. Nationally, both full time and part time Mature students outperform Young students.

The OfS dataset has data for the last two years, indicating that the number of full time young students being in highly skilled employment or higher level study has increased from 34.6% to 46.7%. Similarly, for their mature peers this has fallen from 13.3% to 0%. Data was generally suppressed for part time students but it is encouraging that 100% of part time young students were in highly skilled employment or higher level study for the last year of OfS data.

Section 2.2.3 sets out an aim to improve understanding here.

## **1.4 Students From Low Participation Areas**

### **1.4.1 Access**

Aggregated three year internal admissions data (2016/17-2018/19) indicates that 3.4% of the College HE population are from POLAR4 Quintile 1 (Q1) postcodes. A further 10.1 % are from Quintile 2 (Q2) postcodes. National data (HESA, 2018/19) indicates 11.8% of HE students are from Q1 and Q2, so the shortfall at the College is most likely to be in Q1.

The OfS dataset supports the recognition of this challenge for the College. Using the POLAR4 measure, full time Q1 student numbers have risen from 3.8% to 6.1% over the last five years, with full time Q2 student numbers increasing from 0% to 14.3%. Full time Q5 student numbers have fallen from 57.7% to 40.8% over the same period, so there is evidence of a closing gap.

Using the IMD measure, full time Q1 student numbers have fallen from 4.9% to 0% over the last five years, and Q5 numbers have decreased too from 41.5% to 33.7%. Q2 student numbers have shown an increase however, from 4.9% to 10.1%.

Using the IMD measure (POLAR4 gives little data), part time Q1 student numbers have increased from 5.4% to 7.7% over the last four years, with part time Q2 student numbers falling from 24.3% to 19.2%.

Q5 numbers have increased slightly from 37.8% to 42.3%, so little progress is being made here.

As Colleges generally recruit from their Travel-to-Work area, and there are no Q1 postcodes with easy access to the College, this is perhaps unsurprising. The nearest POLAR4 Quintile 1 postcodes are 16 miles to the North East, in South East Croydon, and 12 miles to the South, on the South Western edges of Crawley. However, an ambitious target should be set for the next 5 years for both full time and part time using combined Q1 and Q2 postcodes as the College fully recognises its role in this dimension of social mobility. This is linked to an OfS National Key Performance Measure and the College would aim for 40% of its HE population being from Q1 and Q2 but this will not be achieved within the lifetime of this plan (to 2024/25).

#### **1.4.2 Success**

Aggregated two year internal exam board data (2017/18-2018/19) indicates that only 5.3% of the College's HE population from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 postcodes do not continue. This is a strong position comparing with 17.9% from Q3 to Q5, and the College does not see the need to set a target in this area currently. The issue for this group seems to be one of Access. This is linked to an OfS National Key Performance Measure.

Continuation data is suppressed/not available for Q1 and Q2 students in the OfS dataset for both full time and part time students.

#### **1.4.3 Progression**

There is a lack of data externally from DLHE (due to very small numbers), and also internally, to monitor their progression rates. Data was suppressed for this group in the TEF Year 4 metrics too for both full time and part time students. Data is suppressed in the OfS dataset for Progression by low participation area. Section 2.2.3 sets out an aim to improve understanding here.

Nationally, full time student POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students have a slightly decreasing gap currently at 6%. There is a small and fluctuating gap between part time POLAR4 Q1 and Q5 students currently at 3.3%.

### **1.5 Students who are Care Leavers**

#### **1.5.1 Access**

The College has incomplete data on this group relying exclusively on UCAS applications which do not make up a representative proportion of the College HE population.

The College will collect such data from enrolment 2020/21 onward with the aim to potentially set an access target. National data (HESA, 2018/19) indicates 0.07% of HE students are care leavers compared to 0.5% of the under 18 population being in care, so clearly there is a national Access issue of some magnitude for this group.

#### **1.5.2 Success**

The College has incomplete data on this group relying exclusively on UCAS data which do not make up a representative proportion of the College HE population.

The College will collect such data from enrolment 2020/21 onward and review Success for the first time in Autumn 2021 and thereafter. This is important to understand more clearly as care leavers are reportedly twice as likely to withdraw from HE as their peers (Neil Harrison, University of Oxford).

### 1.5.3 Progression

The College has incomplete data on this group relying exclusively on UCAS data which do not make up a representative proportion of the College HE population. Generally, once care leavers graduate they are thought to perform broadly as well as their peers with slightly more going on to higher level study and slightly fewer securing professional employment but nevertheless having an identical salary (DLHE 2016/17; Neil Harrison, University of Oxford). This performance may dip and create a gaps in future as more care leavers complete their studies as the above parity may be due to “survivor effect”. Section 2.2.3 sets out an aim to improve understanding here.

### 1.6 Young White Males and Young Males from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2

From internal enrolment data, in 2018/19, 17 (26 in 2017/18) Young White Females and 16 (23 in 2017/18) Young White Males enrolled on HE programmes at the College, with no significant difference in Access or Success (Continuation) rates. As acknowledged above, Progression data is not currently reliable enough to have utility.

The College has insufficient information on Young Males from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 to form conclusions and is unlikely to have data for several years until Access gaps are further closed for those from low participation postcodes. It could also be that data would make individuals identifiable.

### 1.7 Other Groups Who Experience Barriers

In addition, the College sees it as potentially useful to collect enrolment data on the following groups, from enrolment 2020/21 onwards, to begin to understand their HE student lifecycle performance at the College (beginning with Access). These groups have been selected as they have a significant representation in the whole College student population. The same approach will be taken as in 1.5 to these groups if appropriate.

- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities
- Refugee communities
- Carers

## 2 Strategic Aims

### College Overview

#### **The College’s vision is:**

To serve our communities as their outstanding provider of further and higher education and training

#### **The College’s mission is:**

To provide inspirational, high quality education and training that meets the needs of individuals, employers and our local and wider communities

The College’s strategic aims are:

1. To deliver excellence in teaching, learning and assessment
2. To enable students to develop excellent workplace behaviours and skills
3. To ensure an inclusive environment in which our students and staff feel safe and thrive
4. To develop complementary partnerships that contribute positively to sustainable communities

5. To generate strong finances and robust delivery structures that enable future investment and sustainability

Within Strategic Aim 3 is the objective “Our culture is regarded as inclusive, celebrating diversity and community”.

Within Strategic Aim 4 is the objective “Local people have more opportunities to study at higher levels locally”.

Under these overarching strategic aims sit a number of strategies aimed at achieving the College’s overall vision and mission. Amongst these is the Higher Education Strategy which has the following objective around Recruitment.

- Continues to monitor recruitment against OfS Widening Participation categories and especially seeks to increase numbers of HE students from economically disadvantaged and non-traditional backgrounds, and maintain percentage levels of part time enrolment.

## **2.1 Main Target Groups**

### **Access**

- Full time and part time students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods
- Full time Black students
- Full time and part time students with Disabilities

### **Success (Continuation)**

- Full time and part time BAME students
- Part time Mature students

### **Progression**

- Full time Mature students

## **2.2 Access and Participation Aims**

The Theory of Change Model appended to this plan illustrates the relationship between the aims stated below, and their ultimate outcomes, via the means by which these will be achieved. As noted above, the College has not previously collected data on Care Leavers, although it has recently produced a guide for the advisors of this group in supporting them into Higher Level Study (funded by Sussex Learning Network/NCOP/OfS).

### **2.2.1 Access**

- To increase the proportion of all students with a declared disability to 15% (headcount) or above from 13.8% by 2024/25. This is an ambitious aim because 13.5% of the Surrey population (2011 Census) declared a disability but this figure also includes long term health conditions. The College has set this aim using aggregated internal data as it does not wish to distinguish between modes of delivery and wishes to set an aim based on larger aggregated numbers to lessen fluctuations and obtain a more realistic picture.

- To increase the percentage (headcount) of all students from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1 and Q2) from 13.5% to 30% by 2024/25. This is an ambitious aim because the College where HE is offered is not located near any Q1 postcodes. The College has set this aim using aggregated internal data as it does not wish to distinguish between modes of delivery and wishes to set an aim based on larger aggregated numbers to lessen fluctuations and obtain a more realistic picture.
- To increase the proportion of full time Black students to 8% or above from 3.4% by 2024/25. This is an ambitious aim because 1.1% of the Surrey population (2011 Census) are from Black ethnic groups.
- To collect Access data on care leaver students from enrolment September 2020 onwards.
- To collect Access data on students from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities, students from refugee communities, and carers from enrolment September 2020 onwards.

### **2.2.2 Success**

- To remove the non-continuation gap for all BAME students in comparison to White students by 2024/25. This is a very ambitious aim because the gap is considerable (the gap is 17.9% currently), but this is arguably achievable as there is evidence that there are substantial fluctuations year-on-year. The College has set this aim using aggregated internal data as it offers the clearest picture available.
- To narrow the non-continuation gap for part time Mature students in comparison to part time Young students by 2024/25. This is an ambitious aim (the gap is 14% currently and we aim to reduce this to 7.9%) because these are already very motivated employer-sponsored students but Mature students typically have busier, more complex lives. The rate for Young students seems atypically low too.
- To collect Success data on care leaver students beginning from Exam Boards in July to September 2021 onwards
- To explore the feasibility of developing a system for the collection of internal Attainment data on all groups from Summer 2020 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in performance for target groups whilst working within the restriction of not running classified Level 6 programmes

### **2.2.3 Progression**

- To close the Progression gap between full time Mature students and their Young peers to 20% by 2024/25.
- To develop a system for the collection of proxy internal Progression data on all groups from Summer 2020 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in performance for target groups

### 3 Strategic Measures

During 2019/20 the College is seeking to (a) put systems in place to collect data where this is not currently available as described in Section 2.2, and (b) put in place and test systems to evaluate the impact of Access and Participation measures, as described in Section 3.3.

#### 3.1 Whole Provider Approach

As a further education college that delivers HE, a whole provider approach is inbuilt to all of the activities that the College undertakes in order 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 heart of 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 e-Tracker.

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 Director of HE and former College HE students, visits and talks from former students to their former programmes; progression week where focused tutorials and talks take place.

##### 3.1.1 Alignment with Other Strategies and Policies

In terms of Access, the College Admissions Policy clearly states “The application process and the selection of applicants is 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, that it has additional responsibilities to monitor this group in the context of its HE provision, 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 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 2018/19 was Success and the need to improve continuation rates, and mention is made of the gaps noted in 1.1.2 and 1.2.2 above.

Specific actions are: “Year 1 progress tutorials to be introduced for all HE students (Nov/Dec 2019); Directors of Learning to review “at risk” students with HE course leaders on an ongoing basis and devise bespoke interventions; bursaries to be made available from 2019/20 which has potential to ease any

financial issues". Directors of Learning are required to report on progress around improving continuation rates to College HE Board.

As the SED is focused on Quality Assurance, the College sees the potential to action plan around Progression in future here too, once the reliable data is obtained and better understood.

### **3.2 Strategic Measures**

The College will spend 25% of its higher fee income on Access, Success and Progression measures.

The College has allocated the largest percentage of its Access and Participation Fund (55%) to bursaries primarily in order to both attract and retain students from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1), 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 which can impact on 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 School's 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 study 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 achieve a degree-level qualification. This lower entry profile 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 need in terms of the interventions required to stay on programme and to continue.

#### **3.2.1 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 and Q2, and specifically those within the College Group's non-HE population or through Uni Connect Partnerships
- 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
- Carers

Internal and external outreach activities will comprise of the following

- Work with further education students within the College Group (East Surrey College and John Ruskin College) from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 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.
- 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.
- Partnership with Sussex Learning Network and Linking London focused on improving Access for those from POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2.
- Interview of all HE applicants with flexible admissions policies, including the opportunity to resit GCSE English and/or Maths during Year 1, and recognition of prior learning by mature students from industry experience.

### **3.2.2 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 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.

However, 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 groups as a current priority (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), although further plans may in 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. 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 2020/21)
- Be in receipt of the maximum statutory maintenance loan
- Have a household income of below £25,000
- Be resident in a POLAR4 Q1 postcode (ie their home address when applying)
- Have not received money from the bursary before

### 3.2.3 Success Measures

In addition to the bursary identified in 3.2.2, 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. Clearly 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 recent move in 2018/19 to partnering with 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 interview stage (if requested) to Induction and 'on programme'
- Study Skills Sessions at Induction
- 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 by the College careers function
- Further development of the College VLE to support learning
- Exploration of the feasibility of peer mentoring in a small college

### 3.2.4 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 on-line resources/services that support graduate recruitment via the Careers function
- Establishment of significant Level 6 provision 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. Should these become apparent, the college may reappropriate funding from less targeted outreach activities to further support closing Progression gaps. Employability and skills development interventions are also key options here.

### **3.3 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 typical of those likely to be charged above the basic fee from FdSc Internet Software Development, HND Photography, HND Theatrical Make Up and FdA Management.

The APP was also shared with student governors and the student union, and was tabled at 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.

Senior HE student representatives are invited to College HE Board and HE Performance Reviews where monitoring of this plan (via the Risk Register described in 3.4), and the continuous improvement of interventions and the setting of targets on the basis of new data will be discussed.

### **3.4 Evaluation Strategy**

As the aims in 2.2 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 a newcomer to the evaluation of Access Agreements/Access and Participation Plans, so it is difficult to perform a self-assessment of evaluation prior to this plan.

This Risk Register is the primary means by which the impact of individual strategic measures will be assessed and will be regularly updated by the Director of HE, in line with adjustments to interventions during the life of this plan. It will be reviewed in HE Performance Reviews and at College HE Board (approximately seven times per year) as described in 3.4 where adjustments will be discussed and agreed. This will facilitate a continuous improvement of strategic measures as the risk register will be a live document. Review of the risk register (broadly encompassing 3.4.1 to 3.4.4) will then lead to potential adjustments and alterations in the strategic measures.

#### **3.4.1 Financial Support**

Purely in terms of Access, which is not its primary focus, the impact of the availability of financial support on the recruitment of POLAR4 Q1 groups will be initially assessed in Autumn 2020. If adjustments to the promotional strategy for the bursary are required for 2021/22, they will be made from that point. This will also be the case in subsequent years.

The impact of financial support will be assessed by the tracking of 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 2020, 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.

The College will initially measure and assess the “Success” impact, the main impact area (according to OFFA, 2016, a pure Access focus is of questionable benefit) of the current 2019/20 financial support in Autumn 2020 in order to gauge if there are lessons to be learned for the roll out of this APP. From Autumn 2021, 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.

### **3.4.2 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 2020, 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.

### **3.4.3 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 2020 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 into the feasibility of collecting Attainment data internally.

### **3.4.4 Progression**

As stated at various points in this plan, the College will begin to collect Progression data internally from Summer 2020 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.

It is possible that reasonable financial support will 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.

### **3.4.5 An 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 in 3.4 is clearly new and requires regular review and development itself in order to maximise effectiveness. Monitoring arrangements are described in 3.5. Over the course of 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.

## **3.5 Monitoring Arrangements**

Our evaluation strategy has been detailed in 3.4 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 Schools 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)

\* indicates Governing Body representation

# indicates HE Student representation

\*\* indicates review and adjustments to risk register

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 College HE Board will agree modifications to the Theory of Change activities and the College's approach to increase access and participation. Quantitative measures of impact are provided in 2.2 above and are annualised in the Target and Investment Plan.

As stated above, the Risk Register will be regularly updated by the Director of HE (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.

#### **4 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 interviewed and there is an opportunity to discuss fees and financial support at interview.

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 clearly available on a relevant higher education page on its website.

#### **5 Appendices**

- Theory of Change Approach
- Targets and Investment Summary
- Fees Summary

## Appendix – Theory of Change Approach

<u>EXAMPLE INPUTS</u>	<u>EXAMPLE OUTPUTS</u>	<u>REACH</u>	<u>AIMS</u>	<u>IMPACTS</u>	<u>GOALS</u>
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 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisations, NCOPs	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
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 <sup>rd</sup> 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	Enrolling students	To collect Access data on care leaver students from enrolment September 2020	Better understanding of performance around a key target group leading to new	Improved Access

<p>Identify other groups know to be at disadvantage in accessing HE in order to be able to track through the student lifecycle</p>	<p>throughout student lifecycle</p> <p>Ability to understand Access levels</p>	<p>Enrolling students</p>	<p>To collect Access data on students from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller communities, students from refugee communities, and carers from enrolment September 2020 onwards</p>	<p>strategic measures being taken</p> <p>Better understanding of performance around a key target group leading to new strategic measures being taken</p>	<p>Improved Access</p>
<p>Investigate historical non-continuation patterns. Low attendance to be monitored and interventions made. Reviews to be instigated before December holiday for Year 1s.</p>	<p>Improved understanding of non-continuation dynamics and improved performance</p>	<p>Year 1 HE students</p>	<p>To remove the non-continuation gap for BAME students overall as compared to White students</p>	<p>Improve success by removing gap in performance for key target group</p>	<p>Improved Success</p>
<p>Investigate historical non-continuation patterns. Low attendance to be monitored and interventions made. Reviews to be instigated before December holiday for Year 1s.</p>	<p>Improved understanding of non-continuation dynamics and improved performance</p>	<p>Year 1 HE students</p>	<p>To narrow the non-continuation gap for part time Mature students as compared to part time Young students</p>	<p>Improve success by narrowing gap in performance for key target group</p>	<p>Improved Success</p>

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 2021	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	Director of HE 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 2020 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in performance for target groups	Understanding of performance	Improved Success
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 2020 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
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## Summary of 2020-21 entrant course fees

\*course type not listed

## Inflationary statement:

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

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	*
Foundation degree	All FdAs unless otherwise listed	£7,500
Foundation degree	Early Years	£6,165
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	Full time HNC/HNDs running out in 20/21	£6,165
HNC/HND	Music (General)	£7,395
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	All Honours top-ups	£7,500

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Quantity Surveying (0.75 FTE)	£5,625
Foundation degree	*	*
Foundation year/Year 0	*	*
HNC/HND	Engineering/Construction (0.5 FTE)	£3,082
CertHE/DipHE	*	*
Postgraduate ITT	*	*
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2020-21 entrants

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

# Targets and investment plan

## 2020-21 to 2024-25

Provider name: East Surrey College

Provider UKPRN: 10002130

### Investment summary

The OFS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

#### Note about the data:

The investment forecasts below in access, financial support and research and evaluation does not represent not the total amount spent by providers in these areas. It is the additional amount that providers have committed following the introduction of variable fees in 2006-07. The OFS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

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.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Total access activity investment (£)</b>	£38,131.61	£36,509.35	£43,199.11	£43,199.11	£45,001.35
Access (pre-16)	£3,336.45	£3,084.11	£3,599.93	£3,599.93	£3,750.11
Access (post-16)	£30,028.80	£27,257.01	£32,399.33	£32,399.33	£33,751.01
Access (adults and the community)	£4,766.36	£6,168.23	£7,199.85	£7,199.85	£7,500.23
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
<b>Financial support (£)</b>	£17,476.66	£22,616.83	£26,399.45	£26,399.45	£27,500.83
<b>Research and evaluation (£)</b>	£900.00	£900.00	£900.00	£900.00	£900.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
<b>Higher fee income (£HFI)</b>	£127,106.00	£164,486.00	£191,996.00	£191,996.00	£200,006.00
<b>Access investment</b>	3.7%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
<b>Financial support</b>	13.7%	13.8%	13.8%	13.8%	13.8%
<b>Research and evaluation</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total investment (as %HFI)</b>	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%	17.5%

