

## **East Surrey College (10002130)**

### **Summary of 2020-21 to 2023-24 Access and Participation Plan**

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

Access and participation plans show how universities and colleges will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

You can see the full access and participation plan for East Surrey College at:

[https://www.esc.ac.uk/uploads/EastSurreyCollege\\_APP\\_2020-21\\_V1\\_10002130.pdf](https://www.esc.ac.uk/uploads/EastSurreyCollege_APP_2020-21_V1_10002130.pdf)

#### **Key Points**

East Surrey College is a 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 and at John Ruskin College in South Croydon.

Our university-level courses ranges from Higher National Certificates and Diplomas to Foundation and Honours Degrees. We also run significant and growing numbers of Higher and Degree Apprentices, and Higher Professional courses.

Our internal enrolment data shows from 2018-19:

- 41.4% were part time students
- 20.7% were 30 and over (64% were over 21)
- 15.3% were from a BAME (Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic) group
- 7.2% had declared a disability or identified learning support needs
- 10% were from a POLAR4 Q1 (1%) or POLAR4 Q2 (9%) (POLAR4 Quintiles 1 and 2 are the 40% of postcodes from which least students participate in higher education)

The relatively small scale of our higher education means that official data is not always useful to assess performance. To this end, we have been trying to improve internal data for Attainment (the actual grades that students receive) and Progression (student destinations), and will be in a position to identify gaps and set targets in its 2024-25 plan.

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

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

#### **Fees We Charge**

In 2021-22, the maximum fee for our full time higher education programmes was £7,500 per annum, and for our part time higher education programmes it was £5,625 per annum. Subject to the maximum fee limits (currently £9,250) we may increase fees each year for inflation using the Retail Price Index.

Details of our annual fee information can be found here:

<https://www.esc.ac.uk/higher-education/HE-Access-and-Participation>

#### **Financial Help Available**

We have allocated financial support in order to both attract and retain students from low participation postcodes (POLAR4 Q1, the lowest 20% of participation), Our current performance is significantly below expectations and we believe that this financial support, coupled with increased external

outreach activities that focus on the funding of college degree-level study, will help break down worries amongst many potential students around financial risk.

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

- Be on the first year of a higher national, foundation degree, Honours degree, or Level 6 top-up programme that is charging above the basic fee (£6165 per annum in 2021-22):
- 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 this scheme before

### **Information for Students**

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

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

Access (applicants who enrol):

- To increase the proportion of all students with a declared disability to 15% or above from 13.8% by 2024-25.
- To increase the percentage of all students from POLAR4 Q1 and Q2 (the lowest 40%) from 13.5% to 30% by 2024-25.
- To increase the proportion of full time Black students to 8% or above from 3.4% by 2024-25.
- To collect Access data on students from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller and refugee communities, and carers and care leavers from enrolment September 2020 onwards.

Success (performance on the course):

- To remove the non-continuation (starters on Year 1 who do not start Year 2) gap for all BAME students in comparison to White students by 2024/25.
- To narrow the non-continuation gap for part time Mature students in comparison to part time Young students by 2024/25.
- To collect Success data on care leaver students beginning from Exam Boards in July to September 2021 onwards
- To explore the possibility 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 grade performance for target groups

Progression (outcomes after the course):

- To close the Progression (those going into higher level study or highly skilled employment) gap between full time Mature students and their Young peers to 20% by 2024/25.
- To develop a system for the collection of internal Progression data on all groups from Summer 2020 onwards in order to begin to identify potential gaps in performance for target groups

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

As mentioned above, we will make financial support available to both attract and retain students from the very lowest participation neighbourhoods (POLAR4 Q1).

An allocation has been made to outreach and progression activities. This is to support the College's Marketing and School's Liaison teams and further improve the advice and guidance given to HE students wanting to progress on to postgraduate study or professional employment.

A further allocation has been made to strategies to increase success in order to help students who encounter either personal or academic challenges to complete their programme.

In terms of new priorities, we work with a significant number of partner schools and despite having relatively small HE provision, we will explore ways that attainment raising in these schools might be built into these relationships in our 2024-25 plan. Our current plan provides details of how access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups leads to successful participation and progression, and we have been improving internal data to fully evidence this across the student lifecycle, due to gaps in official data. Finally, we already have an established set of pathways into and through higher education with considerable Level 4 and 5 provision, along with thriving higher and degree apprenticeship programmes and we continue to work with university partners on further developments in these areas, which will be detailed in our 2024-25 plan.

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

Higher education students from a range of backgrounds take part in focus groups around the development of the plan, which is also shared with student governors and the student union, and is tabled at College HE Board (the main university-level committee at the College) which has student representation. Students are asked about all aspects of the plan including activities, targets, distribution of funds and the approach to awarding financial support. Senior HE student representatives are invited to College HE Board and HE Performance Reviews (termly quality reviews with Governors) where monitoring of the plan, the continuous improvement of activities and the setting of targets on the basis of new data are discussed.

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

**Financial Support:** from autumn 2021, we have measured the impact of financial support on the Success (Year 1 to Year 2 Continuation) of individual recipients

**Outreach:** activities that focus on groups within targets are regularly reviewed for impact, and research is conducted amongst target groups to assess which approaches might be the most effective and to better understand what changes might be made to our approach to Outreach.

**Success:** the effectiveness of ways to improve performance around continuation is presented for review and adaptation in the HE Self Evaluation Action Plan (a document produced each autumn to highlight actions to improve performance across many different aspects of our HE). We have taken steps to produce internal attainment data, and will be able to assess any gaps and set targets in the 2024-25 plan.

**Progression:** we are only able to identify one progression gap from official data, and have been working to create a method of collecting more complete progression data. Until gaps can be identified, it is not possible to put in place interventions or measure progress.

Our evaluation strategy is reviewed through the following mechanisms: the annual Higher Education Self-Evaluation Document and Action Plan (where continuation rates are reviewed along with profiles of the student body); 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); Marketing Performance Reviews (where Marketing and Schools activities are reviewed); Higher Education Performance Reviews (where HE recruitment and curriculum performance are reviewed, along with programme development); Equality Forum (where differences in performance and associated gaps are monitored).

### **Contact Details For Further Information**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of higher education access and participation at the College, please contact Richard Pearce, who is the Director of HE [rpearce@esc.ac.uk](mailto:rpearce@esc.ac.uk)