

East Sussex College Group: Summary of 2023-24 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers 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 Sussex College Group at <https://adult.escg.ac.uk/degree-level/fees/>

Key points

East Sussex College Group is a Further Education College serving East Sussex, with campuses situated in Hastings, Eastbourne, Newhaven, and Lewes. The College Group is the result of the merger between Sussex Coast College Hastings and Sussex Downs College in March 2018.

Our Higher Education (HE) courses reflect the local and regional Strategic Plans for this area of East Sussex and the courses that we offer aim to support and help with employment into local industries or further afield. We have students working across the UK and many ex-students who are employed around the world. We also have students that when finishing their degree move on to furthermore advanced study. We have begun to develop Higher Apprenticeships, which allows students to be employed and study for higher Education courses at the same, an area we are looking to increase and will be working with local employers. We run a partner college in London that delivers business degrees and teacher training. We have a combined total of about 800 students that study with us across our college. We encourage and welcome all ages of students and we have high proportion of students 24+, we also have students that are working and undertake part time study on a day release basis, something we fully encourage, we offer flexible courses to hopefully meet the needs of our communities as we appreciate that some students could have many external commitments e.g. – families or Carers.

The focus of our access and participation plan is to address the improve outcomes for the following groups, Data has shown us that the following areas are the key areas for us to address

1. We aim to increase our numbers of HE Ethnic Minority students
2. We aim to increase our HE black students 18-25year olds
3. We will aim to support students with known disabilities who struggle to continue to study
4. We are looking at our LGBT students who are reporting mental health issues, and how the college can address any concerns and issues raised.
5. To support students from deprived areas to continue to study with us to complete their courses
6. We are working towards increasing our numbers of Higher Apprenticeships, working with local business to deliver this key national employment agenda
7. First in family to attend University

Fees we charge

We charge the following fees that we consider to be affordable and competitive in the region. For further information including information on fees, bursaries and student financial support please go to. <https://adult.escg.ac.uk/degree-level/fees/> the Higher Education section on the East Sussex College Group website.

Courses / Level	Full Time	Part Time
PGCE/Cert Ed (One year)	£7,000 pa	£3,500 pa
FdA's (Foundation Degree – two years)	£7,995 pa	£3,997 pa
Degree (Three years)	£7,995 pa	£3,997 pa
HND (Higher National Diploma -two years)	£5,950 pa	£3,997 pa
HND School of Information Risk Management, London	£6,165 pa	

Financial help available

We offer financial support to students from underrepresented groups. This helps students access higher education and continue studying until their course is completed. The support includes:

Bursaries of up to £500 in each year of study for the following target groups identified in our plan:

- Student's whose household income is below £25,000
- Students from low participation HE areas (POLAR Quintile 1 and Quintile 2, identified as deprived areas)
- Students who identify as BAME
- Students in receipt of (DSA) Disabled Students Allowance

Hardship Fund

A discretionary hardship fund where student demonstrates exceptional hardship that may be a barrier to learning, this is assessed on a case-by-case basis

Information for students

- Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open day, on our website and by email or telephone communications through our dedicated HE Admissions team
- Current students receive information about fees and the financial support available on the HE section of our website and through our dedicated HE Admissions team. For the most up-to-date information, see our college website, HE section.

What we are aiming to achieve

Our overall aim is to support students to access and achieve in our higher education department. We want to show that we can deliver and support students in a supportive and inclusive environment to ensure our students succeed.

1. We will increase our percentage of BAME students by 2025 From 19pp to 29pp by 2024-25 2
2. We will increase access to black students 18-25year olds from 0pp to 3.63pp by 2024-25 8 3
3. We will eliminate the gap of 15pp in conjunction rates between Polar 4 Q1 and Q5. From 15pp to 0pp by 2024-25
4. We will eliminate the gap in continuation rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025 From 6.4 pp to 0pp by 2045-25 5
5. We will eliminate the gap in progression rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025 From 10pp to 0pp by 2024-25
6. 6 Research/ gathering of data To determine / identify and respond with a full dataset throughout the student lifecycle by 2024-25 pp of LGBT students reporting mental health issues, and how the college can address any concerns and issues raised. Completion 2024-25
7. To grow and develop our Higher Apprenticeship provision from 1% to 15% by 2024-5

What we are doing to achieve our aim

The following activities are what we have identified to achieve our aims

We will increase our percentage of BAME students by 2025

- Support our East London partnerships to target local BAME communities through targeted community outreach and alumni networks
- Set up focus groups within the East London community to look at barriers to access for BAME students, and how best to address them in our partnerships
- Set-up an internal focus group in Hastings, Lewes and Eastbourne through the National Union of Students to look at barriers to access for BAME students, and how best to address them in our region
- Establish a marketing campaign to encourage ethnic minorities in to Higher Education, especially at our East London partnerships
- Pilot higher bursary awards for BAME students to encourage applications and enrolment
- Work with local BAME support groups to better promote the offer to BAME residents in East, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Increase access for Black Students 18-25 year olds (gap)

- Set-up an internal focus group in Hastings, Lewes and Eastbourne through the National Union of Students to look at barriers to access for BAME students, and how best to address them in our region
- Establish a marketing campaign to encourage ethnic minorities in to Higher Education, especially at our East London partnerships
- Work with local landlords in Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes to provide accommodation which may encourage BAME students to move in to the area
- Pilot higher bursary awards for BAME students to encourage applications and enrolment.
- Work with local BAME support groups to better promote the offer to BAME residents in East, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Success

We will eliminate the gap in continuation rates between POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 5 students by 2025

- Develop and adopt new processes to monitor non-attendance with a view to additional early intervention from teaching and support staff.
- Ensure HE mentors at each campus are able to access data to target their work at students at risk of non-continuation
- Statistical analysis of previous non-continuation amongst target group in order to identify particular

trends ● Focus groups with target group to look at barriers to continuation, and how best to address them ● Part-time & flexible study options for all students and development of blended delivery to encourage continuing engagement with course when physical attendance is challenging ● Pilot a higher bursary award for students from POLAR4 Quintile 1 and 2 to support students in continuing their education ● Pilot a revised hardship fund, which awards smaller payments rather than larger repayable loans, and includes emergency relief such as supermarket vouchers. This will support students who may not be able to seek help from parents in times of financial difficulty which would otherwise lead to non-continuation ● Consider scholarship programme – partial fee waivers for students in each of the key deprived areas in the region to encourage continuation of course Success

We will eliminate the gap in continuation rates between students with a known disability and students with

Develop and adopt new processes to monitor non-attendance with a view to early intervention ● Ensure HE mentors at each campuses are able to access data to target their work at students at risk of non-continuation ● Part-time & flexible study options for all students and development of blended delivery to encourage continuing engagement with course when physical attendance is challenging ● Set-up an internal focus group in Hastings through the National Union of Students to look at barriers to continuation for disabled students, and how best to address them ● Better support for students with mental health difficulties through drop in sessions with Southdown, local mental health support provider, commencing April 2020 ● Put a Mental Health Toolbox in every classroom and the common room, and explore enrichment sessions on self-care ● Pilot a higher bursary awards for students with a known disability to support students in continuing their education (e.g. to help with student contribution to DSA laptop)^{3 13} ● Pilot a revised hardship fund, which awards smaller payments rather than larger repayable loans, and includes emergency relief such as supermarket vouchers. This will support disabled students in times of financial crisis Progression

We will eliminate the gap in progression rates between students with a known disability and students with no known disability by 2025

● Develop closer links with local employability / voluntary hubs to support local employment opportunities for graduates ● Work with in-house careers advisors to develop workshops and an HE Careers Toolbox with sections for issues faced by disabled students ● Create an employability seminar programme for all students in conjunction with local employers ● Create an alumni programme to support links with past students (Facebook account) and help graduates to help new graduates into employment across the world ● Use Graduate Outcomes from Higher Education data to establish patterns of employment for students

Increase our Higher Apprenticeship Provision

Through working in partnership with local employers with our outreach business team -Workshop Open days -skills events -networking visits and Hubs

How students can get involved

Students work with the HE student Union and Admissions team in the design of our plan and meet regularly with the Head of our HE who oversees and reviews the plan.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Our programme of activity is informed through our regular data collections and feedback that inform us of progress against our targets so that we can evaluate:

- Our overall plan
- Activity that we have planned and delivering to reach all of our seven target aims
- Impact of achieving our overall aim of improved access and an inclusive environment.

The college HE Management will monitor and report on these processes to the colleges Senior Management. The HE Management will oversee implementation of actions to ensure ongoing progress against our yearly milestones as set in our access and participation plan. We will monitor and reflect on the impact on our target groups, to ensure we are addressing and succeeding in our aims. Concerns raised with regard to meeting targets will be raised and addressed through either reviewing current practice to ensure satisfactory completion.

We will publish evidence from our evaluations on our website by January 2025.

Contact details for further information Please contact David Fowler Head of Higher Education at [david.fowler@escg.ac.uk](mailto: david.fowler@escg.ac.uk) or HE Admissions at [HelloHE@escg.ac.uk](mailto: HelloHE@escg.ac.uk)