EAST SUSSEX COLLEGE

Provider Access Policy Statement

Policy Area:	**Student Services**
Policy Lead:	**Managing Director Business Development & Skills**
Approval By:	**Executive**
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1. Introduction

1.1. East Sussex College provides impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance to support every student to fulfil their potential.

1.2. Careers education and guidance prepares young people for work. It gives them an understanding of the routes to jobs and careers, and the self-development and career management skills they need to reach a positive destination.

1.3. East Sussex College's vision is to empower and sustain its communities through exceptional education and skills development. Hearing directly from other providers helps students make informed choices about where to go next.

1.4. This statement has regard to the DfE statutory guidance *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers* (updated June 2026) and the updated Gatsby Benchmarks, in particular Benchmark 7: encounters with further and higher education.

1.5. Section 42B of the Education Act 1997, as amended by the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, requires schools to give providers of technical education and apprenticeships at least 6 encounters with pupils in years 8 to 13, and to publish a provider access policy statement. The duty does not apply to colleges. The college publishes this statement as good practice, using the same structure the law requires of schools.

2. Policy statement & aims

2.1. East Sussex College gives a range of education and training providers the opportunity to access students, to inform them about approved technical education qualifications, apprenticeships and higher education. Careers guidance at the college must be impartial, in line with the statutory duty, and must not show bias towards any route, academic or technical, or towards the college's own provision.

2.2. Students are told about all routes to higher skills, including apprenticeships at all levels, T Levels, V Levels, higher technical qualifications, A levels and degrees.

2.3. The aims of this statement are:

- To develop students' knowledge of all the career pathways available to them, including technical qualifications and apprenticeships
- To help students find out about education and training opportunities outside the college before they make choices about their future
- To reduce drop-out from courses and the risk of students becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET)

3. Scope

3.1. This statement applies to all students of East Sussex College, including students on 14 to 16 provision.

3.2. It is for universities, colleges, independent training providers, apprenticeship employers and other providers who want to speak to students, for college staff who organise careers activity, and for schools that commission 14 to 16 provision from the college.

4. Student entitlement

4.1. Students have direct access to other providers of further and higher education, technical training and apprenticeships.

4.2. As good practice, every student aged 16 to 18, and every student aged 19 to 25 with an education, health and care plan (EHCP), has at least 2 encounters each year with providers of approved technical education qualifications or apprenticeships. These take place in

National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week, in addition to providers attending careers events at the college.

4.3. Encounters take place during the college day. Each encounter should give the provider a reasonable amount of time to explain who they are, the qualifications or apprenticeships they offer, the careers these lead to and what learning or training with them is like, and to answer students' questions.

4.4. By the end of their programme, every student should have met the full range of providers that may form their next step, including universities, higher technical providers, apprenticeship employers and training providers, and other colleges. Where possible, students should meet both staff and current students from the provider.

4.5. Students on 14 to 16 provision take part in the same encounters. Where they remain on a school's roll, the encounters support the commissioning school to meet its own provider access duty.

4.6. Students with SEND take part in encounters on the same basis as other students, with preparation, small-group formats and reasonable adjustments where needed.

5. Diversity, equity and inclusion

5.1. The college encourages all students to make decisions about their future based on impartial information.

5.2. Access to other providers is promoted to all students, so that every student can find out about other providers of further and higher education and apprenticeships. The college monitors participation by student group.

6. Requests for access

6.1. Providers should send requests for access to the Careers Leader, whose name and contact details are published on the college website.

6.2. Requests should be made at least 10 working days before the proposed date. They should state the provider, the qualifications or apprenticeships it offers, the proposed activity and audience, and the names of any visitors.

6.3. The Careers Leader will respond within 10 working days.

7. Granting & refusing requests

7.1. Access will be given for providers to attend progression events and themed weeks, such as National Careers Week and National Apprenticeship Week, and through the college's tutorial programme and enrichment activities.

7.2. The college may refuse a request where:

- Safeguarding checks cannot be completed in time
- The activity would not be impartial, or would promote a political view or a commercial product
- The proposed date conflicts with assessments, examinations or other commitments, or there is no suitable space
- The provider has previously failed to follow this statement or the college's safeguarding requirements

7.3. Where a request is refused, the Careers Leader will give the reason in writing and, where possible, offer an alternative date or format.

8. Premises, facilities & safeguarding

8.1. The college will provide an appropriate room or hall, to be agreed with the provider.

8.2. All rooms have computers, projectors and screens. Computer rooms can also be arranged.

8.3. The Careers Leader or a careers adviser will organise this, working with the provider to make sure the facilities suit the audience.

8.4. Providers must complete the college's safeguarding checks, including those for external speakers, before they work with students. The college will check that the content supports its Prevent duty.

8.5. Providers will be met and supervised by a member of the college's careers team throughout their visit.

9. Live & virtual encounters

9.1. The college will consider live online encounters with providers where requested. These may be broadcast into classrooms. Technology checks will be needed in advance to make sure systems are compatible.

9.2. Virtual encounters may be used alongside in-person encounters, but not instead of them.

10. Parents & carers

10.1. Parents and carers are encouraged to take part and may be invited to events to meet providers. Encounters held outside the college day can complement, but do not replace, the encounters in Section 4.

11. The college as a visiting provider in schools

11.1. The college contributes to schools' provider access encounters across East Sussex, working through the East Sussex Careers Hub.

11.2. When college staff visit schools, they give pupils accurate information about the college's full offer, including T Levels, apprenticeships, V Levels, A levels and higher education at the University Centre.

12. Roles & responsibilities

12.1. The Careers Leader coordinates all provider requests and is accountable to their senior line manager.

13. Complaints procedure

Complaints about this statement should be raised through the college's Complaints Policy.

14. Compliance & monitoring

14.1. Students' attendance at provider encounters is recorded on the student record. The college reports its progress against Gatsby Benchmark 7 each term through Compass+.

14.2. The Careers Leader reviews this statement annually, using feedback from students and providers, and agrees it with the Executive team. The outcome is reported to the Curriculum, Skills & Quality Committee in the annual careers report.

14.3. This statement is published on the college website.

15. Related policies & references

15.1. This statement should not be read in isolation: ensuring students hear impartially about every route open to them is at the core of East Sussex College's activities, and staff should therefore read and familiarise themselves with the following policies and procedures:

- Careers Education & Guidance Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding & Prevent Policy
- SEND Policy
- Student Experience Operational Framework 2026-30

15.2. Other external guidance:

- DfE - Careers guidance and access for education and training providers (statutory guidance, updated June 2026)
- Gatsby Charitable Foundation - Good Career Guidance: The Next 10 Years (2024)