



Summary of 2021 - 2025 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 Solihull College and University Centre at <https://www.solihull.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/access-and-participation-plan.pdf>

Key points

Solihull College and University Centre's overarching strategic aim in relation to access and participation is:

Working towards the provision of an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious and have very high standards of academic and personal achievement which will enable them to progress to employment, further study and enterprise.

Evaluating our performance (see pages 1-7 of the full plan) has confirmed that in terms of access and progression to employment or further study, the college is achieving this aim. However, due to an identified underperformance in continuation rates for disadvantaged, ethnic and disabled students, our access planning initiatives and activities are mainly focussed on:

- Reducing the gap in continuation between students who come from the most disadvantaged post codes and students from more affluent areas;
- Reducing the gap in continuation between white and non-white students;
- Closing the gap in continuation between non-disabled and disabled students;
- Improving the disclosure and recording of disability for all Part Time students;
- Improving support for care leavers to further encourage recruitment and maximise success.

Fees we charge

The maximum fees charged by Solihull College and University Centre which are covered by the full plan¹ are:

- £ 8,500 for Full Time
- £ 4,000 for Part Time

See pages 1 and 26 of the full plan, and <https://www.solihull.ac.uk/demographic/university-level-learner/>

Financial help available

¹ We also deliver some HE courses in partnership with universities which are covered by their access plans.

The college offers annual bursaries of up to £1000 for both Full Time and Part Time students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds which are awarded for the duration of the course, and paid at three points throughout the academic year, subject to satisfactory attendance and engagement with studies, e.g. submission of coursework.

See page 18 of the full plan and <https://sway.office.com/STujxyQnYzajLVfy?ref=Link>

Information for students

The full Access and Participation Plan (and other documents) is published on the College website in an accessible format, with other formats such as Braille produced on request and sent to current or prospective students by our Student Services Team. The Student Services Team can be contacted by telephone and/or in writing for additional guidance, and to respond to questions or requests for supplementary information, Individual advice is always provided at course interview prior to any offers of a place.

We have Open Days specific to the needs of Higher Education, a dedicated social media team who interact regularly with prospective and current students, and provide information to the organisations we report to as part of our normal college operating procedures.

Information specific to the costs of local accommodation is given on the college website and individual advice can be provided by Student Services upon request either by e-mail, telephone or at personal interviews which can be arranged by appointment.

See pages 18 and 19 of the full plan and <https://www.solihull.ac.uk/uni-level-learner/university-level-learners-introduction/>

What we are aiming to achieve

As can be seen on from page 14 onwards of the full plan, the college is committed to promoting and sustaining the high standards which have consistently delivered the best possible learning opportunities for its students, and has developed a number of related, subsidiary and inter-dependent strategies. In particular, these college-wide strategic goals are:

- to provide an environment in which all students can enjoy their learning, be ambitious and have very high standards of academic and personal achievement which will enable them to progress to employment, further study and enterprise.
- to offer innovative and responsive programmes that meet the needs of employers and students, respond to the demands of the economy and continuously explore new market opportunities.

Further strategic goals provide the framework from which our Higher Education Strategy has been developed include a commitment to:

- continue to develop vocational pathways from the full-time further education provision and respond to the needs of local employers;
- continue to offer higher education provision that is both high quality and affordable;

- provide educational, professional and academic opportunities which are accessible to all members of the local community and in particular to those from disadvantaged areas and non-traditional backgrounds.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

In order to achieve our objectives, Solihull College and University Centre is committed to:

- Improving advice and guidance sessions for all prospective Higher Education students to encourage greater disclosure of disability and to promote the support available to all disabled students from initial enquiry onwards;
- Identifying students learning on the college's learning lower level courses who are care leavers and ensure that they are made aware of the support available to them if they want to study for their degree at Solihull;
- Providing all care leavers with a named support worker as a first point of call in case of difficulty including financial hardship and accommodation issues;
- Introducing reliable process to ensure all care leavers are recorded, in order to enable ongoing provision of support and monitoring;
- Focussing on improving the engagement of all Full Time students in their learning and foster a sense of community and belonging to the college;
- Continually strengthening our existing processes to identify students at risk of failure or who are becoming disengaged with their study;
- Enhancing the college's existing student performance data sets to include data based, ethnicity, age and disability;
- Monitoring course level performance by characteristic so that it is embedded in the college's annual cycle of quality improvement and enhancement.

For more information see pages 11 to 13 of the full plan.

How students can get involved

Gathering and reacting to student input with regards to course management and monitoring is factored into annual action planning and, where appropriate, with documentation such as the full plan approved through our clearly defined student representative system.

We have student representation on the Higher Education Quality and Standards Board, Higher Education Strategy Group, Governing Body and our Student Voice Steering Group, and all Higher Education courses, regardless of the awarding body, have a named student representative.

See page 14 of the full plan and

<https://www.solihull.ac.uk/uni-level-learner/university-centre-information/>

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the full plan is carried out alongside our other engagement activities, with formalised consultation through:

- direct feedback from student representatives;
- opinions and feedback gathered via our Virtual Learning Environment;
- feedback from annual Student Focus Groups;
- and student input on many of our Boards, Groups and Committees.

See pages 14, 15 and 16 of the full plan for more details.

Contact details for further information

See the relevant section on <https://www.solihull.ac.uk/about-us/student-services/>
or e-mail Mary Younan, Dean of Higher Education and Research, mary.younan@solihull.ac.uk