

Hereford College of Arts

Summary of 2025-26 to 2028-2029 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how all Universities and colleges can improve equality of opportunity. Their aim is to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, can study on a Higher Education course, succeed in their studies, and gain positive employment outcomes after graduation. Progress on HCA's plan is reviewed and reported on annually to college Board.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Hereford College of Arts (HCA) on our website: <https://www.hca.ac.uk/fees-funding/undergraduate#tab-7406-access-and-participation>

Key points

The ethos of HCA is inclusive and enabling and we aim to empower all members of our community to succeed in life and work.

National and college-level data showed us that prospective students from the following groups would benefit from extra support and encouragement to enrol on higher education courses:

- Students from lower-income households
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds
- Students from military families.

Data and student consultation showed us that students with the following characteristics would benefit from extra support to achieve their potential during their studies at HCA:

- Students with disabilities, impairments or learning difficulties
- Students who are over 21 years old when starting their Higher Education course
- Students from lower-income households
- Students who are the first in their family to attend higher education.

National and college level data showed us that students with the following characteristics would benefit from additional support to ensure they progress to higher level employment, further study, or other positive outcomes after graduation:

- Students with disabilities, impairments or learning difficulties
- Students from lower-income households.

Some of our students may have more than one characteristic which is considered a risk. We call these intersections of risk. Our plan also addresses the needs of exceedingly small groups of students, although their characteristics are not explicitly mentioned to protect their privacy. Our plan also considers students with shorter and longer-term needs.

See pages 1-6 of our access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

At HCA, the fees we charge for 2025-26 are £9,275 for full-time students and £4,625 for part-time students.

You can find the most up-to-date information about fees and our inflation statement on our website at <https://www.hca.ac.uk/fees-funding/undergraduate>

See page 46 of our access and participation plan for more information.

Financial help available

New undergraduates starting Higher Education for the first time with a full maintenance loan from the Student Loans Company are eligible for a cash bursary of £1000 to help with costs for the first year of their course. This is paid directly into students' bank accounts without requiring them to make an application. This ensures all eligible students receive the funds and application is not a Barrier.

These bursaries are paid to students in 3 instalments: 25% is payable in the Autumn Term, 25% in the Spring term and 50% in the Summer Term. This staggered approach aims to support financial Management.

Any HCA student may also apply to the Higher Education Hardship Fund. Typical grants made will be less than £500, although exceptionally the college may make a larger grant. Eligibility and amount offered is assessed on a one-to-one basis taking account of the specific context of each student applying to the fund. This is generally paid in one instalment.

We also offer Care Leavers a separate financial support package. For details see our website: <https://www.hca.ac.uk/student-services/care-leavers>.

See pages 29-30 of our access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Prospective students can access advice and support on fees and financial support through the College website, at open days and applicant events or by emailing registry@hca.ac.uk.

Current students can also access advice and support about fees, financial support and academic support through induction, course areas, student services and registry teams, and on our website at <https://www.hca.ac.uk/fees-funding/undergraduate>.

See pages 29-30 of our access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

We aim to encourage creative excellence and diversity of all kinds by supporting students from all backgrounds to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to enrol on our higher education courses.

We aim to create an environment at HCA where every student can be empowered to thrive during their studies and then progress to positive outcomes after graduation.

We recognise the importance of consultation and of co-designing and co-delivering intervention projects with students. This approach aims to enable us to provide additional support that can meaningfully empower students to succeed in life and work.

To help us do this we have created 11 objectives and designed a programme of actions and activities in our plan. These complement HCA's whole-college strategic plan.

See pages 7-20 of our access and participation plan for more information.

What we are doing to address key risks to equality of opportunity

We will support diversity in the creative sector by increasing the enrolment of students who are from lower income households and those from Black, Asian, Mixed, or 'Other' backgrounds. We will do this by designing bespoke outreach programmes of activity with schools and colleges to raise aspirations and attainment in a way they feel will suit their learners.

We will address nationwide imbalances in educational experiences and outcomes for a range of students with 'at risk' characteristics. We will do this through the creation of an 'intervention hub' where we can co-design and deliver small group support in partnership with students, staff, and the wider creative community.

We will highlight the value of creative arts education in supporting community and the local economy. We will do this by working with local arts and business organisations to further support our students to gain positive outcomes post-graduation.

See pages 21-15 of our access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

Students can get involved in the design and delivery of our interventions by:

- Sharing views and feedback in a rolling programme of course-level consultation
- Co-designing, attending or leading small group support sessions
- Contributing to 'student voice' structures such as Student Council.

See page 27 of our access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

HCA will measure how far we have met our aims through

- Finding out if we have met our long-term data targets
- Considering how questions around 'student belonging' are answered in the Student Engagement Survey
- Consultation with students in course areas
- Use of specific research methods designed to support the ethical evaluation of impact on small groups of students.

We will report on our findings annually through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report and feedback informally through the ongoing consultation process.

See pages 27-29 of our access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact Sarah-Jane Crowson at s.crowson@hca.ac.uk for further information