

Access and Participation Statement 2021-22

Introduction

This statement aims to demonstrate how the college takes active steps to encourage access and participation for under-represented and disadvantaged students. Widening access to students from these groups and supporting them through the entire educational life-cycle has a significant impact on social mobility, student well-being and success and is a driving force behind the College's development strategy.

Our vision is to be widely recognised within the independent college sector as a 'first choice' for students seeking a high-quality education.

Our mission is to provide exceptional learning, encouraging students in developing their spirit of inquiry in order to realise their personal and professional aspirations, and potential, through quality education in a culturally diverse and inclusive environment.

Values - The David Game Higher Education (DGHE) Centre is a diverse, inclusive and professional academic community that respects individuals and enables them to strive for success in order to contribute positively and sustainably to the local region, the international economy and wider society in general.

Consequently, students at DGHE can be confident that they have joined an institution that is serious about education and one that strives to deliver courses of the highest quality within an environment that ensures an outstanding student experience to those of all backgrounds.

We publish this Access and Participation Statement not only to meet regulatory requirements but also to inform prospective students who may want to know whether their particular characteristics are represented within the student body. This document sets out the following:

1. Analysis of the College's current student body, by socio-economic background, ethnicity, age, and disability; identification of underrepresentation of any particular group.
2. The College's ambitions and strategy in widening access and participation to underrepresented groups.
3. The activities currently undertaken to widen access; and the activities which support completion and success.
4. Our targets, investment and supporting policies.
5. Self-evaluation of Access and Participation

Part One: Analysis of the current student body at DGHE

In the previous Access and Participation Statement (for AY 20/21) the data and targets quoted were for the entire College student body (i.e. including those registered with other institutions and studying with DGHE under a partnership or franchise agreement). Since January 2021 new HND students are all registered directly with DGHE and as such the population in the data analysis below contains only those students; these represent c.15% of the entire student body. Therefore the data cannot be directly comparable to that published in the previous year's APS.

1. Socio-economic status

DGHE is located in Aldgate, in the City of London. The cost of residential accommodation in the immediate locality is beyond the reach of our students and very few of them live nearby but instead they rely on excellent public transport links to the rest of London and further afield. 91% of our student population reside across a wide area of the city with 9% outside of London postcodes. To comment on the participation of those with a low socio-economic status one can analyse the POLAR 4 data however Londoners overall have a fairly high rate of participation in HE.

On the other hand a more helpful data set to analyse is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD, 2019 published by the Office for National Statistics). From this we can see that 75% of our current students reside in postcodes in the lowest 5 deciles of the IMD. It can therefore be stated that DGHE caters well for those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale within our local area (i.e. London).

2. Ethnicity

Due to the relatively small size of the institution a highly granular analysis of each ethnicity is not very insightful so for this purpose we have used broad categories. The ethnicity of our current student population falls into the following proportions:

Category	Ethnicities included	Percentage of current student body	Percentage in the population of London
A	African & Any other Black/African/Caribbean background & Mixed White and Black African & Mixed White and Black Caribbean	4	13.3
B	English/Welsh/Scottish/N.Irish/British & Any Other White background	95	60
C	Arab, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Mixed White and Asian, Any other Asian background	1	18.5

To compare this with the population of London as a whole we have looked at the government source here: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/british-population/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest>. Representation at DGHE of those of ethnicities in our categories A and C above is lower than their representation amongst the population of London. Therefore this is an area we have identified where we would like to improve.

3. Mature students

Since the inception of the Higher Education Centre at David Game College in 2013, there has been a very high proportion of mature students applying to and enrolling on the programmes. Currently 82% of the student body are over the age of 25 and 29% are over the age of 35. The reports published by UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-analysis-reports> show far lower participation by over 25s nationally.

Therefore we can be confident that the College is well above the national average in this respect and indeed it is a defining characteristic of our provision that we cater to this demographic.

4. Disabled students

The percentage of students who identified as either disabled or with learning difficulties was 0% for the intakes in January/February and May 2021 whereas the national average for those accessing non-degree level Higher Education was 11% for the most recent available data (for academic years 2019/20 (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/27-01-2021/sb258-higher-education-student-statistics/numbers>) Therefore this is an area we have identified where we would like to improve.

However, it should be noted that various social and cultural factors govern the incidence of self-reporting of a disability and the profile of our students being mature and largely born outside the UK mean that we could have many enrolled students with an undeclared disability.

Part Two: The College's ambition and strategy

The College seeks to contribute to the national strategy of widening access and participation to underrepresented groups. At present we have a clear view of our current performance and can identify two areas where we would like to improve.

Firstly the number of students of non-white ethnicity needs to increase as a proportion of the whole student population. Our target is to increase this from 5% to 10% by the end of the 2021/22 academic year. Primarily this will be achieved by means of engaging proactively with educational agents within the Black and Asian communities and targeted 'outreach programmes' partnering with the appropriate schools, colleges, youth organisations, faith organisations and other relevant community bodies.

Secondly we need to increase the percentage of students identifying as disabled (currently at 0%) as it is below the sector average of 11%. We have set a target to increase this to 4% by the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

Although we identified these areas for improvement in the past we have been unable to make a significant improvement but the College is committed to continue with its efforts to realise change in these areas and is reviewing its strategy in this regard.

We suspect that the location of the College is a factor in limiting the number of disabled applicants. As we have a high proportion of students living well beyond the City of London in which we are

located, the transport challenges that non-disabled students consider, are perhaps magnified for disabled students, and thus could become a barrier to considering DGHE as a potential provider.

We were conscious that our marketing materials did not make explicit what support we offer to disabled students so we have recently taken steps to heighten the visibility of our support services and the opportunity for applying for DSA via our website, VLE and other communications to student (e.g. newsletters).

We also believe that socio-cultural issues could be a factor in the under reporting of disability. Therefore our Advice and Well-being team will become more active in highlighting the Disability Services we offer and encouraging their use.

The College has consulted with the current students in developing this Access and Participation Statement. They are largely supportive of the work that is being undertaken and partial amendments have been made in light of the feedback received.

Part Three: Our current activities and support for students

How we widen participation and improve access

1. Students unsure about how to develop their careers:
The College holds Open Days with presentations by specialist lecturers and guest speakers who advise on the most appropriate programme of study in order to achieve career ambitions.
2. Students with English as a second language:
Where applicants are unsuccessful in getting onto the academic programme of their choice due to an insufficient level of English, the College provides subsidised EFL classes that enable students to improve their skills and hence apply for admission at the next intake.
3. Courses with rolling intakes:
The College recognises that not everyone's life falls into the normal academic cycle and therefore offers intakes throughout the year including September, January/February and May.
4. Flexible modes of study:

Mature students typically have busy lives outside of college so full-time courses offer classes limited to 2 days of participation (Monday to Friday) and also a Flexi-programme where students attend just two evenings per week plus Saturdays. A student may change mode of study if they experience a change of circumstances. Furthermore, we ensure that the College calendar is in line with the local school holidays so those students with children are not disadvantaged due to childcare constraints.

5. Students without complete academic qualifications:

If students present without a full academic profile the College applies a process of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which looks to 'credit' the learning through previous work experience in addition to other certified learning activities.

6. Disabled learners:

Although DGHE is situated in a period building, the renovations completed in 2017 have made the building fully accessible. A chair lift is situated in the lobby for access from the street level to reception, and a passenger lift ensures that physically-disabled learners are able to reach all areas of the College in which they are timetabled for classes. A further chair lift is planned for access between areas of the building at different levels.

7. Helping 'Returners' to education:

The College encourages mature 'returners to education' through the provision of a comprehensive induction programme and multiple levels of 'transition' support during the early stages of the programme to ensure retention, progression and achievement within this group.

8. Comprehensive Information Advice and Guidance regarding accessing student finance (SLC loans) for course fees and maintenance and disability support (DSA – Disabled Student Allowance).

How we support our students to succeed in their studies

The list below provides a summary of activities in place at DGHE that support the student's learning, well-being and success:

1. Comprehensive pre-enrolment Information Advice and Guidance
2. Detailed Induction programme
3. Transitional learning support systems
4. Study Skills and academic writing support classes
5. English as a foreign language pre-sessional and in-course support classes
6. Individual Learning Plans negotiated with personal tutors
7. Academic 'Drop-in' clinics
8. Assignment focussed workshops and seminars
9. Online Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) available 24/7
10. Welfare support services
11. Welfare staff are trained in supporting issues around mental health and have a thorough knowledge of the specialist support services available locally to which learners can be signposted.

12. Disability support services
13. Guest speakers and industry visits
14. Careers Services (Personalised access to a professional Careers Advisor, Termly Careers Fair, personalised guidance on further study, UCAS applications and transition to employment, and comprehensive online resources)

The College's learning and teaching strategy recognises the benefit of adopting a pedagogic approach for its learners that applies classroom practices which best suited to engaging those with greater life and work experience. In addition, a great emphasis is placed on the importance of study skills (including IT skills) such that it is embedded in the curriculum from Term 1 and continues and develops throughout the study programme. Each student is closely monitored via Individual Learning Plans so that barriers to success can be identified and remedial action taken.

A Disabilities Services Handbook has been published which offers guidance on a list of the 12 most common issues along with strategies for both staff and students, to mitigate their impact on students' learning.

Part Four:

Summary targets

Specific targets to be met by the end of the 2021/22 academic year may be summarised as follows:

1. Increase the proportion of those enrolled with Black and Asian ethnicity to 10% of the student body
2. Increase the proportion of those enrolled who have a disability to 4% of the student body

Investment

It is not possible at present to be precise about the investment that will be made in improving access. Part of our development work leading up to the new academic year will be to cost the improvement events identified in this statement and allocate resources as required.

Policies that support our access and participation plans

David Game College believes in the principle of freedom from discrimination for everyone, regardless of their age, gender, disability, ethnic or national origins, marital status, sexual

orientation, social background or religious beliefs, or of being part of any other group which may have experienced discrimination. The College aims to provide a real equality of opportunity for all existing learners and staff and supports the same for the wider community.

The College's Access and Participation Statement is supported through the application of a number of other policies including (but not limited to):

Disability Adjustments Policy

Equality and Accessibility Policy

Admissions Policy

Part Five: How we evaluate the effectiveness of our activities

The College has a management structure and ethos that ensures the targets set are realistic and achievable and regularly evaluated. The collection and analysis of appropriate data on an on-going basis will be essential if the targets stated above are to be achieved. The College recognises that it must do more in this regard and is confident that improvements will be made as it has completed implementation of a new management information system (called *Quercus*, provided by *Ellucian*) during 2019/20, which is fully compliant with the requirements of HESA Data Futures and the Office for Students Transparency conditions.

Data is collected at multiple points during the academic cycle including: application, admission, induction, transition, study phase, progression points, completion and leaver information. It is also collected through feedback from participants in specific events and student consultations. Data will be collated throughout the year and reported through the College's Committee structure to ensure that evaluation is embedded in the College's strategy. Summary action plans and progress will also be reported to the College's Governance Board.

Part Six: Collaborative Provision

Where the College provision falls under a franchise or sub-contracting agreement, or other collaborative arrangement which may require a joint effort in meeting both or common access and participation targets, institutions will consult in order to ensure mutual satisfaction and compliance.