

EDA COLLEGE



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ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT¹

Version Control & History

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Related EDA College Policies

EDA College Strategic Plan 2026–31	Admissions Policy
Widening Participation and Outreach Policy	Student Support Policy
Equality, Diversity and Inclusive Policy	Personal Tutoring Policy

External reference points

Office for Students, Regulatory framework for higher education in England — Condition A2: Access and participation statement.
Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA), section 5.
Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty.
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) / Jisc.

¹Published in accordance with Condition A2 of the Office for Students' regulatory framework

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Our Commitment

EDA College intends to submit a full Access and Participation Plan (APP) to the Office for Students (OfS) at a later stage, as part of its application for registration in the Approved (fee cap) category, in accordance with Condition A1 of the OfS's regulatory framework. That plan will set out numerical targets, funded intervention strategies and a multi-year investment commitment, and is subject to OfS approval expected to take place in September 2027. This Access and Participation Statement is published in the meantime, in accordance with Condition A2, to set out EDA College's current commitment to, and activity in support of, equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and groups underrepresented in higher education. Unlike an access and participation plan, the content of this statement does not require OfS approval; it will be reviewed and republished at least annually, and reviewed again in full once the College's Access and Participation Plan along with fees, investments and targets (FIT) once they are approved and in force.

1. Purpose

1.1. To provide an access and participation statement that supports EDA College's strategic aim, as detailed in the EDA College Strategic Plan 2026–31 together with the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusive Policy, of widening access to higher education and supporting students to progress and achieve on their chosen programme of study.

1.2. To ensure that this statement meets the requirements of the Office for Students (OfS) Regulatory Framework Condition A2 and the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) for access and participation statements.

2. Background

2.1. The OfS requires, as part of its initial and ongoing conditions of registration, that all higher education providers produce either an Access and Participation Statement or an Access and Participation Plan. EDA College currently delivers higher education programmes through a franchise partnership with Birmingham Newman University, with students funded via the Student Loans Company (SLC), and is preparing to apply for direct OfS registration in the Approved (fee cap) category. An Access and Participation Statement is the appropriate document for EDA College at this stage.

2.2. For the current academic year, students registered through the franchise arrangement are subject to Birmingham Newman University's own approved Access and Participation Plan, as well as to this Statement. Following successful direct registration with the OfS, EDA College will publish this Access and Participation Statement on its website and review it on an annual basis, ahead of transitioning to a full OfS-approved Access and Participation Plan.

3. General Statement

3.1. EDA College Ltd is an independent higher education provider based in Shirley, in the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull, within the wider Birmingham conurbation. Founded in 2013, the College is committed to offering high-quality, flexible higher education programmes, accessible to students who have the capacity to benefit from them, regardless of background, circumstance or prior attainment.

Our mission: *"To educate, develop and empower students to achieve their personal and professional goals through inclusive and innovative learning environments that inspire lifelong growth."*

3.2. Solihull as a whole is a relatively affluent borough — the 2025 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranks it the 93rd least deprived of 206 local authority districts in England (2nd best quintile), and the least deprived upper-tier authority in the West Midlands. However, this average masks significant local polarisation. Outside the North Solihull regeneration area, Green Hill in the Shirley East ward — closest to EDA College's own location — is among the small number of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 20% of England nationally: it ranks in the 17th percentile for overall deprivation, the 9th percentile for employment deprivation, and the 9th percentile for crime and disorder deprivation, and falls within the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods for health and disability deprivation. Cranmore South, in the neighbouring Shirley South ward, also falls within the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods on the health and disability domain. (Source: Solihull Metropolitan

Borough Council, Deprivation in Solihull: The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025, based on MHCLG's English Indices of Deprivation 2025.)

3.3. This local picture is consistent with EDA College's own experience of the community it serves: a student body drawn disproportionately from groups underrepresented in higher education nationally, many of whom are the first in their family to enter higher education, and many of whom combine study with work and caring responsibilities.

EDA College student profile: Registry data and working estimates

Student characteristic	EDA College (Registry data, N=875, where available)	National HE average (approx.)
Mature students (aged 21+)	91.8%	~37%
Students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds	23.0%	~27%
Students in employment during study	Not yet collected	~30%
Students with caring responsibilities	Not yet collected	~15%
First in family to attend higher education	91.9%	~40%
Students from low-income households	Not yet collected	~30%
Students with declared disabilities	Not yet collected	~15%
Students from POLAR4/TUNDRA Quintiles 1–2 (low HE participation areas)	57.4%	~23%
Students from IMD Quintiles 1–2	95.2%	~28%
Care-experienced students	Not yet collected	~3%

Note: mature students, ethnicity, first-generation entrant status, and POLAR4/TUNDRA and IMD quintile figures above are drawn from EDA College's Registry data for 875 enrolled students, with area-based measures assigned using the Office for Students' official postcode look-up tool and MHCLG's English Indices of Deprivation. Rows marked "Not yet collected" reflect fields not currently captured in Registry records (declared disability, care-experienced status, caring responsibilities, household income and employment during study); collecting this data is a priority for 2026/27, after which the national comparators above will allow direct benchmarking. The 'Not yet collected' fields will be completed once EDA College will maintain own data summaries from September 2026 (currently the data is maintained in collaboration with our lead provider Birmingham Newman University).

4. Strategic Goals 2026–31

4.1. The EDA College Strategic Plan 2026–31 is organised around four interconnected strategic pillars:

Pillar	Focus
1. Students	Delivering outstanding outcomes for every student through excellent teaching, personalised support and meaningful progression.
2. Community	Serving and strengthening our communities through widening access, employer engagement and charitable activity.
3. Innovation & Research	Embracing digital transformation, research-informed teaching and continuous innovation to enhance the student experience.
4. Partnership	Building powerful partnerships with universities, employers, communities and regulatory bodies to expand our reach and impact.

4.2. Widening participation and access to higher education is fundamental to achieving each of these four pillars, and in particular Pillars 1 (Students) and 2 (Community).

4.3. EDA College takes an inclusive approach to recruiting and supporting individuals with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and values-led delivery guided by the College's five core values: Inclusivity, Excellence, Innovation, Integrity and Community.

5. Access and Participation Objectives

(A) Areas seeking to address

5.1. The areas of access and participation EDA College seek to address are informed by the following principles:

- To provide an opportunity for those who have been out of education for a significant period and wish to return to study.
- To provide an opportunity for those who may not, in the past, have had the confidence to undertake study at higher education level.
- To enhance every student's personal confidence through success and achievement, underpinned by a supportive learning environment.
- To provide a welcoming and secure environment in which equality of opportunity, diversity of background, and richness of experience are valued.
- To help every student identify and realise their career aspirations, through diverse routes into employment and/or further study.

(B) Ambition and strategy

5.2. EDA College aims to recruit and support students from a wide range of underrepresented groups, including — often inter-sectionally:

- Mature learners returning to education after a significant gap.
- People from neighbourhoods underserved by higher education, including the pockets of high deprivation identified in Section 3.2, even within an otherwise relatively affluent borough.
- People minoritised on the basis of race and ethnicity and underrepresented in higher education.
- People with caring responsibilities and/or other commitments that may restrict access to traditional higher education.
- First-generation entrants to higher education.
- Students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties, recognising that disability disclosure is not yet captured in Registry data and that building this into enrolment collection is a priority area for future work.

5.3. EDA College's flexible approach to programme design and delivery — recognising work experience alongside academic qualifications, and offering scheduling that fits around employment and caring commitments — is central to reaching these groups. Recruitment relies significantly on trusted relationships within the local community, including referrals from current and former students, alongside direct engagement with local community and institutions.

(C) Activities and support for students

5.4. EDA College provides support and encouragement to prospective students from first enquiry through to enrolment, including informal discussion ahead of a more formal application process, and opportunities to meet current students about their experience of studying at EDA.

- Access: engagement with prospective students from communities with historically low participation in higher education, flexible entry routes for mature and non-traditional applicants, and clear pre-application information and guidance.
- Success: personal tutoring, academic skills support, and pastoral and wellbeing support designed around a student population that is predominantly mature and often balancing study with work or family commitments — set out in the Student Support and Personal Tutoring Policy, Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy, and Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.
- Progression: careers guidance and employability support to help students move into graduate-level employment or further study, informed by the College's relationships with local employers.
- Financial support: the College financial support offer is being developed as part of the full Access and Participation Plan.

5.5. These commitments apply to all EDA College students. Where students remain registered through the Birmingham Newman University franchise arrangement, they also remain eligible for support under the University's own approved Access and Participation Plan.

6. Key Access and Participation Priorities

This section sets out, theme by theme, how EDA College currently approaches access and participation in practice — expanding on the objectives in Section 5.

Fair Access

The majority of EDA College students are in employment, and study alongside work and personal commitments; the College provides a non-traditional route to academic and professional qualifications. This, together with the local deprivation picture set out in Section 3.2, drives EDA College's commitment to fair access. Entry requirements recognise the value of relevant work and life experience alongside academic qualifications, consistent with the College's Admissions Policy, allowing EDA to attract applicants from a wide range of backgrounds who may not hold traditional entry qualifications.

Flexible Mode of Study

EDA College's delivery is designed around the reality of a predominantly mature, working student population. The current pattern of delivery is daytime/weekdays along with blended learning options as prescribed in programme specification and academic regulations published & approved by the Birmingham Newman University. The College's Virtual Learning Environment Policy and Learning Resources Strategy support students who need to combine study with employment or caring responsibilities, including virtual access to course materials outside timetabled sessions.

Access for Disabled Students

EDA College is committed to accommodating disabled students as fully as practicable, in line with its Disability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy. The College facilitates accessibility provision e.g. step-free access, assistive software, specialist equipment funding. As set out in Section 3, EDA College's Registry records do not yet capture disability disclosure for any of its 875 enrolled students, against a national HE average of ~15%; this is not evidence of a genuinely undisclosed population, but confirmation that a dedicated disclosure question is not yet built into enrolment data collection. Introducing this, alongside care-experienced status and caring responsibilities, is a priority for 2026/27.

Participation & Performance

EDA College's approach to participation is underpinned by its five core values:

- Inclusivity — we welcome every student and create an environment where all can thrive.
- Excellence — we hold ourselves to the highest standards in teaching, learning and support.
- Innovation — we embrace new ideas, technologies and approaches to improve outcomes.
- Integrity — we act with honesty, transparency and accountability in all that we do.
- Community — we serve and strengthen the communities we work within.

EDA College's Strategic Plan 2026–31 commits to maintaining continuation above 80%, completion above 75%, and progression into graduate-level employment or further study above 60% throughout the plan period, achieved through proactive academic and pastoral support across a student's whole journey.

The current actual performance against these targets at EDA College in our BSc Business Management programme delivered in partnership with Birmingham Newman University is given below;

Continuation (Retention Rate)

Sr No	Intake	Enrolled initially	Currently Active	Retention percentage %
Cohort 1	Jan 24 cohort	370	296	80
Cohort 1-D	Jan 24-D cohort	21	17	81
Cohort 2	Sep 24 cohort	294	225	77
Cohort 3	Jan 25 cohort	186	155	83

Achievement Rate

Cohort	Module	Achievement Rate (%)
JAN24 (FY & Year 1)	Education and Society	86
	Degree Tutor Group 1	86
	Being Human in Digital World	86
	Degree Tutor Group 2	86
	Personal DDME (Sem 1)	74
	Introduction to Management	76
	Principles of Marketing	74
	PDME (Sem 2)	75
	Introduction to Accounting and Finance	75
	Introduction to OB and HRM	75
SEP24 (FY)	Education and Society	91
	Degree Tutor Group 1	91
	Being Human in Digital World	86
	Degree Tutor Group 2	86
JAN25 (FY)	Education and Society	85
	Degree Tutor Group 1	86
	Being Human in Digital World	86
	Degree Tutor Group 2	89

The College monitors the continuation and achievement rates closely and applies appropriate interventions to for students' attendance, engagement and module level achievement for improved performance in prospective completion and progression.

Lifelong Study

The large majority of EDA College's current students are mature, studying alongside work or parental responsibilities, and many are returning to higher-level study after a significant gap. Supporting lifelong learning — rather than assuming a traditional school-to-university pathway — is central to the College's mission and to its approach under Pillar 1 (Students) of the Strategic Plan.

Digital Support

EDA College supports students' learning journeys through online course resources and digital library access via its Virtual Learning Environment, recognising that flexible, anywhere-access learning materials are particularly important for a mature, working student body. The college provides free Microsoft office suite to all enrolled students to provide necessary tools to engage in teaching, learning and assessments. Moreover, the college rewards high performing and consistent students with laptops in every year of their progression to next level of the programme. The college has a plan in place to provide financial support to the learners facing financial hardship. The laptop loan policy is also going to be effective from September 2026.

Public Engagement

Contributing to the local community through education and support is a key part of EDA College's access and participation agenda. The College's Board of Governors includes a majority of independent members who bring external challenge, scrutiny and relevant skills and experience from outside the College, consistent with the College's Governance Framework. Being new this locality, the College is gradually building up relationship with local employers, the local council and other charitable and community organisations to enhance its level of public engagement.

Partnership Models of Working

EDA College currently delivers higher education programmes in partnership with Birmingham Newman University, through a franchise arrangement, sharing a commitment to widening access and participation and to contributing to the local community through education. As EDA progresses towards direct OfS registration,

the College anticipates that this and other partnership relationships (see Pillar 4, Partnership, of the Strategic Plan) will continue to support its access and participation aims.

7. Monitoring, Review and Approval

7.1. This Access and Participation Statement is considered and approved by the Board of Governors, informed by the Academic Board.

7.2. The impact of EDA College's access and participation activity is discussed by the Board of Governors on a quarterly basis and formally reviewed at least annually. The Statement itself is reviewed on an annual basis and may be amended at any time; any amendments are approved by the Board of Governors and the revised document made available on the EDA College website and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

8. Data Protection and Confidentiality

8.1. EDA College is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a Data Controller under registration reference ZB519374. As a Data Controller, EDA College implements appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure personal information is processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), as set out in the College's Data Protection Policy.

9. Alternative Format

9.1. This document can be provided in alternative formats (including large print, audio and electronic) upon request. For further information, or to make a request, please contact Mr Talal Khan, Registry Lead at registry@edacollege.co.uk.

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