

Summary of 2026-27 to 2029-30 Access and Participation Plan (APP)

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation plan sets out provisions and actions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students (the regulator for higher education in England) which aims to protect the interest of students by supporting a diverse and independent higher education sector.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Derby College (subsequently referred to as DCG) at <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

DCG was awarded “Silver” overall (Student Experience “Silver” and Student Outcomes “Gold”) at the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework assessment (TEF), which is a national exercise to assess excellence in higher education teaching. DCG is committed to improving equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups in higher education. The APP aims to enhance access, success, and progression for diverse/underrepresented, student populations through targeted initiatives and strategic improvements.

Key points - educational excellence, social mobility, economic prosperity, and regional employability

DCG is a ‘General Further Education College’, contributing to post 16, Adult, Further and Higher Education in the UK. DCG is committed to learning, inclusivity, broadening and encouraging participation in education, and to doing all possible to support people to keep learning thereby championing educational excellence, social mobility, removal of barriers and increasing life chances at all levels. Our strategic aim is to deliver exceptional education that creates opportunities, transform lives and supports social mobility.

DCG recognises that opportunities for young people and adults to study at higher levels are often limited. Our challenges include addressing the economic disparities and social mobility ‘cold spots’ in Derby and the East Midlands. By bridging the gap in inequality and removing barriers to learning, DCG plays an important role in providing flexible, high quality, specialised higher-level learning, which is supportive of the “Skills England Strategy”, thereby helping students to develop the skills needed for successful careers and positive employment opportunities.

DCG’s higher education provision includes courses at levels 4 (Higher National Certificates), 5 (foundation degrees) and 6 (full degrees, BSc and BA) for full-time, part-time students and higher and degree apprentices. Courses are specialised, building on subject expertise across a range of areas such as, animal management, equine, criminology, offender management, sport, software development, professional construction, engineering and professional teacher education. These are led by experienced staff who have industry knowledge and are also qualified teachers.

DCG has strategic ambitions in educational excellence which focusses on student success through high quality teaching and learning experiences. Social mobility is a focus, by removing barriers and enhancing opportunities for underrepresented groups and enabling economic prosperity through employer collaborations and skill development. See pages 3-8 of the access and participation plan for more information at <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

Fees we charge

In 2026/27 DCG will charge new entrants to full degrees a maximum of £8,700 (STEM programmes) and £7,700 (Non-STEM programmes) for full time study. Those new entrants joining to study Higher National Certificates (HNC) will be charged £6,525 for full time study. For part time study the fees are adjusted accordingly. More information on fees can be found on our web site.

Financial help available

DCG offers various forms of financial support to help students manage the costs associated with higher education. These include bursary/support of at least £500 to a maximum of £2000, for eligible students meeting the bursary criteria, which includes but may not be limited to, assistance with travel (depending on distance living from college), a difficulty/disability, household income, and any caring responsibilities.

There is also a hardship fund for crisis management of up to £500, for short-term financial problems.

Up to date information about bursaries and hardship funds can be found on our website and via the student virtual learning environment. Please see pages 29-30 of the access and participation plan <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

Information for students

The full version of DCG's access and participation plan will be available on the college website see pages 29-30 of the access and participation plan <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

What we are aiming to achieve

DCG's higher education population is diverse and attracts students from a number of underrepresented groups. Please see pages 3-4 of the access and participation plan for details.

We have four key areas of focus to ensure that students from these areas of underrepresentation have the opportunity to access and succeed in higher education study:

1. Access - DCG will aim to increase the proportion of applications from students from non-white ethnic minorities for higher education study
2. Success – DCG will reduce the gap for success of students with a disability/difficulty in continuing their higher education studies
3. Success- DCG will reduce the gap for success of students from the most deprived communities in continuing their higher education studies
4. Success - . DCG will reduce the gap for success of students with mental health/well-being difficulties in continuing their higher education studies

Assuming that DCG is successful in its ambitions this will mean that over the period of this plan the number of students from non-white ethnically diverse minority groups will increase and that any inequality in success within the other identified groups will be negligible.

See pages 12-15 of the access and participation plan for more information <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

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

DCG takes a whole college, whole student lifecycle, and targeted approach to supporting access and participation.

DCG will deliver targeted interventions, to support access to higher education for students from non-white ethnically diverse minority groups through marketing, monitoring of applications, support and transition opportunities. We will increase the success of students with disabilities/difficulties, students from disadvantaged areas and students with mental health/well-being challenges through student support, staff awareness raising, flexible delivery models and additional financial support (if eligible), so that these students are successful in continuing their studies.

As a whole college, DCG, will continue to apply the strong support to its diverse student community recognised by the award of “Silver” by the Teaching Excellence Framework in 2023 where the Panel of Assessors reported student outcomes as gold (outstanding) in recognition of the outstanding outcomes for our students together with no significant inequalities in our provision. See pages 15-22 of the access and participation plan for more information <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

How students can get involved

DCG’s student voice underpins every aspect of the higher education experience. There are opportunities to represent the student community at course, programme and governance level. In addition, all students have the opportunity to participate in internal and external quality surveys. DCG will provide many and regular opportunities for understanding, discussion, and scrutiny of progress against the objectives in this access and participation plan. See pages 25-26 of the access and participation plan for more information <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of DCG’s access and participation activity will include the analysis of data to determine whether there is any correlation between engagement in intervention activities and the resulting impact. Students will be involved in evaluation via surveys, as contributors to focus groups and student voice activities mentioned above.

Evaluation findings will be published on DCG’s website.

For more information see pages 26-29 and 47-66 of the access and participation plan <https://www.derby-college.ac.uk/DCG-APP-2026>

Contact details for further information: Melanie Lanser, Vice Principal Quality of Education
melanie.lanser@derby-college.ac.uk.