

Sysco Business Skills Academy Ltd

Summary of 2024-25 to 2027-28 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

An access and participation sets out provisions that will be meaningful and effective in promoting equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups, as determined by the Office for Students.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Sysco Business Skills Academy Ltd at <https://www.sysco.uk.com/higher-education/policies-and-procedures/>

Key points

Sysco Business Skills Academy Ltd currently offers Higher Education in Performing Arts and Sport across a variety of campuses in England.

After analysing our current and previous student cohorts, we have identified two risks to the equality of opportunity within our Higher Education programmes. These are:

- Non-White British Students Access Rates
- First in Family Students Continuation Rates

Sysco is committed to reducing risks to equality of opportunity for all student groups and particularly those identified above.

To achieve our objectives, we will implement the intervention strategies identified below using the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register as the framework.

See pages 2-4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

The maximum fees for our full-time Higher Education programmes are £7,500 per year. Further information regarding fees per programme is available on the Sysco website through the following link: <https://www.sysco.uk.com/higher-education/>

Financial help available

We are committed to investing funds towards addressing the risks to opportunity that we have identified.

All students from the non-White British community will be eligible for a Scholarship of £250. This Grant will be used to overcome the financial concerns of prospective students from the non-White British community relating to accessing Higher Education. The Grant will be payable as a lump sum at the end of Semester 1.

All students confirming that they are First in Family to access Higher Education will be eligible for a £500 First in Family Scholarship. This Scholarship is issued as an acceptance that First in Family students often incur higher costs during their studies.

Sysco will also provide a Hardship Fund which aims to help students in financial difficulty.

See page 18 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Information for students

Sysco will ensure that the Access & Participation Plan is presented in a clear manner both on our website and on our Virtual Learning Environment to enable prospective and current students, parents and guardians and other stakeholders to easily access and understand.

All of the information relating to fees and financial support, including eligibility criteria, will be made available to prospective and current students in a number of formats including print and electronically through our website, via a dedicated Higher Education section.

Tuition fee and financial support will also be provided to applicants in their Offer Letter, which specifies the fees due for the duration of the programme including any indication of fee increases and any additional costs they may incur because of their studies.

Sysco will be careful to ensure that all published information is accurate, clear, complete, accessible and timely.

See pages 17-18 of the access and participation plan for more information.

[What we are aiming to achieve](#)

While Sysco performs well against a wide variety of access and participation indicators, we recognise that there is more we can do to address all under-represented student populations. As such, following an assessment of performance, we have formed our objectives and will focus on those areas in which we believe we can make most impact.

Increase the proportion of non-White British students within our Higher Education entrants

Our objective is to increase the proportion, and therefore number, of students starting our Higher Education programmes from non-White British communities. We are expecting to increase the size of our total student population over the next five years and so, by setting an objective to increase the proportion of non-White British students within our Higher Education entrants, we will both increase the representation of this group within our wider student population and also disproportionately increase the numbers of non-White British students.

Increase the continuation rate of First in Family students within our Higher Education cohort

Our objective is to ensure more First in Family students remain in-learning on their Higher Education programme, thus reducing drop-out for this group. We are expecting to increase the continuation rate of First in Family students over the next five years by 5% year-on-year to reach a target of 85% continuation for this group by 2027/28.

See page 4 of the access and participation plan for more information.

[What we are doing to address keys risks to equality of opportunity](#)

Sysco are committed to reducing the risks to equality of opportunity for all student groups and particularly those identified above. To achieve our objectives, we will implement the intervention strategies identified below.

It should be noted that issues of equality of opportunity are complex and there are many elements that will have a more profound impact, which we have little control to impact. As such, the intervention strategies we will implement are targeted specifically at activities in which we feel we can make an impact.

Increase the proportion of non-White British students within our Higher Education entrants

We will implement an aspiration-raising strategy for the non-White British community. Aspiration-raising activities consist of interventions carried out to raise students' aspirations to apply to, and attend, Higher Education. Research has not found a causal link between raising aspirations and reducing equality of opportunity to access and so we will be careful to constantly evaluate whether our strategy is having an impact on aspirations.

An analysis of the prior attainment of students in vocational training programmes in the areas in which we intend to deliver our HE programmes indicates that non-White British students are less likely to attain HE Entry Requirement grades compared to White British students. As such, our aspiration-raising promotional campaign will focus on motivating non-White British students undertaking vocational training programmes to aspire to the necessary grade profile.

As such we will implement the following strategies:

1. Targeted aspiration-raising promotional campaign
2. Scholarship

Increase the continuation rate of First in Family students within our Higher Education cohort

We will seek to enhance our academic and personal support package to First in Family students to ensure they are accessing this additional resource. Mentoring, counselling, coaching and advising all involve a relationship between two individuals where a more experienced person provides support, advice and/or information to a less experienced individual. This normally includes some combination of psychological/emotional support, course/career support, academic skills support, and acting as a role model.

We will implement the following strategies (Annex B):

1. Improve personalised academic support for First in Family students
2. Improve personal support
3. Scholarship

See pages 4-10 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

Sysco Business Skills Academy Ltd operate meetings, inclusive of student representation, in which widening participation is a key element. In addition, Sysco Business Skills Academy will issue links to HE programme surveys in which anonymous feedback can be collated, including questions specifically related to Sysco's Access and Participation Plan and the targets within. Any follow-up actions, including focus groups, will address concerns or queries raised. Sysco Business Skills Academy will also produce an annual monitoring report detailing all relevant programme information, including a comprehensive Equality & Diversity data section, with an action plan to take forward into the following academic year.

In the development of this plan, we have consulted with our student cohort, in which any barriers to continuation and achievement are highlighted by our existing student cohort.

See page 15 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

We have used a methodology to help us develop a logical sequence of events in our intervention programmes to bring about the changes we wish to achieve. This promotes an impact-driven evaluation approach, interlaced with process evaluation, to determine which interventions work in transforming access and student outcomes.

The evaluation process is iterative with the findings in each step helping to support continuous improvement.

The Access and Participation Plan has been approved by our Board of Directors and our Equality & Diversity Focus Group.

The details of the plan, including resources and timelines, will be considered at appropriate sub-group meetings.

See pages 16-17 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Please contact Simon Dawson, simon.dawson@sysco.uk.com, 0151 236 1748 for more information.