



Access and Participation Strategy Statement

West Dean College is committed to widening access and increasing participation in education in the creative and applied arts in accordance with the original charitable purpose of the College as defined by the College's founder Edward James. The 1964 deed of trust sets out the charitable purpose of the Foundation as follows,

"an educational foundation where creative talents can be discovered and developed, and where one can spread culture through the teaching of crafts and the preservation of knowledge that might otherwise be destroyed or forgotten".

To this day, the Foundation continues Edward James' tradition of supporting emerging artists and crafts people where ever they are from. Our current vision statement states the following aim,

"To inspire learning in the creative and applied arts through West Dean College – an international centre of teaching excellence, promoting creativity and innovation, and the focus of an extended community of practice in the arts."

Through an improved and developing focus on alumni, employability and a wider advocacy role in relation to the creative and applied arts, the College seeks to maximise its impact.

The College actively seeks to recruit students from a range of non-traditional backgrounds into its higher education provision and is committed to developing strategies to support this.

Provision of bursary and scholarship support

The College offers financial support for students who otherwise would not be able to afford to study at West Dean. There are bursaries available for higher education students and also for foundation and short course students to support wider access. We work with a number of partner organisations to offer a range of scholarships based on aptitude to ensure that students with potential are able to develop to a professional level in our very specialist subject areas. Currently a third of all tuition fees are met through bursary or scholarship funding and for 16/17 approximately 60% of students are in receipt of some support.

Access routes and flexible forms of study

The College continues to review and develop its portfolio of courses to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage with creative craft practice from entry to advanced level. Many programmes are available through part time and block delivery enabling students to combine their studies with employment or other commitments. The College offers 700 short courses a year, many at introductory level allowing students the opportunity to build their skills and experience prior to HE entry.

Support for retention and progression

The College has high retention rate which is supported by a commitment to high levels of student support. The College is committed to low student staff ratios on all programmes intended to support the specialist and applied nature of the subjects offered. Study skills support is available to all

students and additionally specific support is available for students with disability or language needs. Students are actively encouraged to access Disabled Student Allowance where applicable and the College works with other organisations locally to facilitate specific support needs when required.

Graduate employability

The College has a strong track record in preparing students for employment and self-employment in our sector and continue to build on this through the curriculum, the opportunities provided by the wider College environment and through our strong industry networks and partnerships. All programmes provide opportunities for work placement or in-house work related projects to ensure students complete their studies with the skills and confidence necessary for a successful career in our sector. The College monitors the success of its provision in supporting students to develop their employability through first destination surveys, the long term tracking of alumni careers and is further developing its alumni service to foster long term relationships and provide increased post-graduation support.

Outreach and community engagement

The College is continuing to develop its programme of outreach work through engagement with schools, colleges and the wider community promoting the value of our subjects and their continued importance to the cultural and creative industries. The College also hosts an annual programme of public events, conferences, lectures and performances as well as being active in contributing to external exhibitions, events and debates ensuring that we are effective advocates for our subjects.