

Access and Participation Plan Summary

Shrewsbury College

2026-2030

The college's access and participation explains how we support equality of opportunity for students who may experience barriers to higher education. It sets out the challenges some students face and what we are doing to remove these barriers. The focus of our plan is to support students from underrepresented groups to access, succeed in, and progress from higher education.

Vision: "Where every student makes outstanding progress."

Mission: To deliver outstanding academic and vocational education, enabling progression to university or employment, and to be a local centre of excellence for higher education.

As of the most recent Ofsted inspection on 4 March 2025, Shrewsbury College was rated Outstanding overall.

You can see the full access and participation plan for Shrewsbury College at

<https://www.shrewsbury.ac.uk/documents/regulatory-information/72-access-and-participation-plan>

Key points

Access - Higher education applications: students from TUNDRA Quintile 1 areas (a measure of how likely young people in local areas are to enter higher education), students from Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 communities, Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, and students with learning difficulties, disabilities, or health conditions. These groups often face barriers such as limited information, disrupted education, or fewer visible role models.

Attain - Succeed academically: students who require additional academic support, including those with disabilities, health problems, or mental health needs. Without early and personalised support, these students are more likely to face challenges maintaining academic progress.

Continue - Complete their studies: mature learners, students with disabilities or health conditions, and those experiencing mental ill health or insufficient personal support. These challenges can lead to disengagement, lower retention, and higher withdrawal rates.

Progress - Positive outcomes: students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnic minority groups, and students with care responsibilities or disabilities are less likely to move into full-time employment or further study after completing their course. Financial pressures, limited networks, and lower confidence can make progression more difficult.

See pages 5-7 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Fees we charge

Shrewsbury College is an Approved (fee cap) provider with the Office for Students (OfS) that has met the OfS's requirements for registration and is subject to a fee cap. The college can charge eligible students fees up to a certain limit and is eligible for direct grant funding from the OfS for teaching and Research England for research activities.

For the 2025-26 academic year, the UK government has increased the tuition fee cap by 3.1% for the first time in several years. Shrewsbury College has made the decision to not pass on this fee increase for the 2025-26 academic year, but envisages further increases of fees over the duration of this plan using RPI-X. Fees for our higher-level course follow national regulations. Full-time and part-time fee summaries are published on our website each year.

Financial help available

We offer hardship support for students who may struggle with essential costs. We provide financial support including hardship funds for students who may struggle with essential costs linked to studying.

Full details of what is available and who is eligible are on our website and in our prospectus.

Information for students

Financial support information is made available in multiple formats:

- Online (website)
- Printed materials
- In-person events and briefings

The college ensures that students and key influencers (e.g., parents, carers, school staff) are always well-informed.

See pages 28-29 of the access and participation plan for more information.

What we are aiming to achieve

The plan sets five strategic objectives with measurable targets:

1. To **improve** enrolment of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, students with disabilities, TUNDRA Q1, and IMD Q1 students
2. To **improve** enrolment, students with learning difficulties, disabilities, or health problems
3. To **reduce** the continuation gap for students with learning difficulties, disabilities, or health problems
4. **Sustain** the completion gap between Young (Under 21) and Mature (21+) students.
5. To **increase** the percentage of completed students progressing into Full Time Employment or additional Higher Education.

See pages 5-7 of the access and participation plan for more information.

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

Shrewsbury College has outlined 5 intervention strategies that it will implement to achieve the objectives and targets as set out in the access and participation plan. A summary of the 5 intervention strategies is shared below:

Strategy 1: Aspire – Accessing HE

Activities: Careers events, subject masterclasses, school-based outreach.

Goal: Improve perceptions of HE and increase enrolment from underrepresented groups.

Budget: £21,000

Strategy 2: Supporting HE Transition

Activity: Specialist transition support for Level 3 and returning students with declared needs.

Goal: Improve enrolment and retention.

Budget: £60,000

Strategy 3: Supporting HE Success

Activities: Academic and wellbeing support, extended IT access.

Goal: Improve continuation and academic performance.

Budget: £60,000

Strategy 4: Supporting Younger Students

Activity: Induction Fair to build belonging and awareness of support services.

Goal: Sustain completion rates.

Budget: £4,000

Strategy 5: Thrive in HE

Activities: Mentoring, university masterclasses, careers support, top-up agreements.

Goal: Improve progression outcomes.

Budget: £4,000

See pages 8-22 of the access and participation plan for more information.

How students can get involved

Shrewsbury College has submitted its Access and Participation Plan after consulting and engaging with students from different backgrounds to ensure that the views are representative of the college's student population and reflected throughout the plan.

The college places student voice at the centre of its Access and Participation Plan. Students have contributed directly to the development of our intervention strategies through a wide range of consultation activities. These opportunities enabled students from different backgrounds and experiences to share their views, ensuring that the interventions within the plan genuinely reflect student needs and priorities.

See pages 28 - 29 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

Robust evaluation is critical for Shrewsbury College for contributing to the development of sector-wide knowledge of what works, for whom, and in what contexts, to address risks to equality of opportunity. The college has applied a credible approach to developing its evaluation strategy using both quantitative and qualitative methods throughout this plan, highlighting the evaluation methods to be used as outlined in each of the identified Interventions throughout this plan, demonstrating the impact of the work implemented to addressing risk to equality and opportunity.

See page 29 of the access and participation plan for more information.

Contact details for further information

Higher Education enquiries - higher@shrewsbury.ac.uk for feedback and queries, so we can keep improving the support we offer.