



WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25



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Reflections



The 2024/25 academic year marked the end of our 2021-2024 Access & Participation Plan. It was also the introduction of a merged team in the form of Widening Participation & Success, bringing together targeted outreach and success initiatives under one headship.

This change reflected the strategy and vision behind the 2025-29 Access & Participation Plan. As a result, the 12 months covered in this report brought about the innovation of new initiatives, along with the consolidation of established programmes, which has prepared the team for continued success over the course of the next 5 years.

Notable highlights that showcase this shift in strategy include the introduction of our Student Success & EDI Team, the formal launch of eight Surrey STARS school partnerships and our inaugural Surrey Widening Access Conference.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report. As a team, we are very proud of the work and development put in place over the past academic year; not only in terms of impact for the individuals engaging directly with activity and support, but also in how the team is positioned to continue building and fostering a Surrey community that extends across both life on campus and the county more broadly.

Rob Thatcher

Head of Widening Participation & Success

University of Surrey



[Left]
Rob Thatcher

We will celebrate and embrace the diversity of our student community by recognising the individuality of each student and by creating an environment conducive to success for all. We will provide a variety of study types and be dedicated to fostering an inclusive, personalised, globally focused and co-created student community, which removes physical, social and attitudinal barriers to success.

*Access & Participation Plan
2025-29, p.3*

An overview of our impact

We track HE progression and continuation rates amongst participants who have previously engaged in committed widening participation activity. This relates to on-campus events and/or sustained engagement. Using HESA Track data, 2022/23 is the latest cycle available that acts as a benchmark for our overall impact.

HE Progression

5,464

learners entered HE

98%

registered onto first degree

40%

entered High Tariff Provider

HEAT-HESA
Data Dashboard
2015-2022

In total, we tracked **10,225 outreach participants** as expected to have entered higher education between 2015 and 2022, of which **5,464 (53%) had entered HE**.

Of the cohort in higher education, **5,380 (98%) had registered onto their first degree** whilst **2,205 (40%) were studying at a High Tariff Provider**.

The **University of Surrey** was the most popular HE destination, with 278 identified as studying at the institution. Further analysis indicates that outreach participants were **4.9x more likely to register at the University of Surrey** after attending 3-4 activities.

HE Continuation & Attainment

91%

*continued study at
HE provider*

83%

*received a 1:1 or 2:1
qualification*

HEAT-HESA
Data Dashboard
2015-2022

We identified **4,240 tracked entrants with first degree continuation status**, of which **3,855 (91%) continued at their HE provider** as of 2021.

We identified **1,955 tracked qualifiers** who had completed full time study, with **1,615 (83%) receiving a 1:1 or 2:1 qualification** from 2017 and 2022 qualification years.





Applying to Surrey

We work collaboratively with colleagues in Admissions, Recruitment and Events to provide contextual offers, in addition to travel bursaries, to eligible students to reduce barriers when applying to the University of Surrey. This year, we are expecting registration of **1,148 contextual offer-eligible applicants** and we **supported 98 applicants with their travel costs** when attending Open and Offer Holder Days.

Student Ambassadors

Working for the University of Surrey, students are able to benefit from flexible work around their studies and access ongoing professional development support. This year, **245 Student Ambassadors** were registered on the scheme, collectively **working over 5,500 hours** on widening participation activity. We strive for our team to be representative of the wider student population, with **59% of our Ambassador cohort meeting one or more widening participation criteria**.

T'Keyah - University of Surrey student

Since I enrolled... I have worked as a Student Ambassador. These opportunities provide me with an income alongside my studies. I have really enjoyed working with younger audiences and have recently worked on the same Law Summer School that I previously attended.

UG Criminology
& Sociology



[Left]
T'Keyah

[Right]
T'Keyah and her fellow Student Ambassadors ready to start working on the Year Residential Summer School



Scan Me

Read more about
T'Keyah's story



Student Success & EDI

All students deserve to experience the conditions that allow them to thrive in higher education. We support our University of Surrey students to engage with their studies through financial, resource and communal support. The last 12 months saw the creation of a new division within Widening Participation & Success – the Student Success & EDI Team.

Building upon the established support and provision afforded to eligible students, we have continued to support our cohort financially through **£8,000+ in Access to Learning Funds** and awarded **51 Care Leaver and Estranged bursaries**.

Pastorally, we continue to be a source of advice and guidance to our students when navigating their study commitments alongside other responsibilities, whilst we have distributed **17 long-term laptops loans** to enable study where IT and technical setup is required.

Moreover, we have been working in collaboration with the Students' Union to implement and develop Future Leaders, an extracurricular professional and personal development programme that is co-designed by eligible students for eligible students.

Liam

Student Success is all about empowering our students to overcome barriers to their education and university experience. The voices of our student networks are absolutely critical in identifying these barriers and making change; during my time at the Students' Union, I saw first-hand how supportive and important these communities are to our students.

*Surrey Students' Union
President 2024-25*

We will be hosting social, cultural and wellbeing activity, in addition to creating online content, that strengthens a sense of belonging and community on campus.

Furthermore, through training, guest speakers, voluntary and paid work opportunities, students will be afforded opportunity to build their CV under the guidance of a University of Surrey network of support services and alumni.

*[Left]
Previously Surrey Students' Union President 2024-25,
Liam has since been appointed by the WPS Team as
Student Success & EDI Officer*



Student Network Champions

In preparation for the launch of Future Leaders in September 2025, **we recruited five Student Network Champions (SNCs)** to co-design and create content. Each Student Network Champion is a paid role for 12 months, with the responsibility to lead a community of students – with shared and/or similar lived experiences – in accessing social events and wellbeing activity, in addition to advocating for their peers to inform best practice and change across campus.

Habi - University of Surrey student

Moving from Italy to the UK meant starting from scratch again... Starting again meant learning the language of higher education as much as English itself... As SNC for Social Mobility, I'm working to deliver outreach and peer events, feeding student feedback into action points.

UG Chemical Engineering

Student Networks

In collaboration with the University of Surrey's Students' Union, we are introducing Student Networks for:

- Care Experienced & Estranged
- Commuters
- Disability & Neurodiversity*
- International Students*
- Mature Learners
- Race Equality*
- Social Mobility
- Student Carers

[Right]
Habi has been appointed as Student Network Champion for Social Mobility

Our networks will launch in 2025/26 and will be available to UG students who are eligible for Future Leaders.

* Indicates Surrey Students' Union-led network

Scan Me

Read more about Habi's story



Surrey STARS

Surrey STARS is the sustained tracking of attainment-raising in schools, working collaboratively with secondary partners from across the local area towards achieving higher GCSE grades amongst eligible learners.

As part of our offer to secondary schools, we provide a variety of experiences both in-school and on-campus. In total, **we worked with 4,129 secondary school learners** across Years 7 to 11 from participating Surrey STARS schools. Our ambition is to work with the same learners year on year, scaffolding their learning through new experiences that showcase the study and career opportunities available to them, whilst providing further support to raise GCSE Maths and English attainment.

Year 9 learner

Loved today's trip. My favourite part was the Lab session - being able to go in and do things in those green roomy labs after seeing them so many times when arriving or leaving campus was amazing. Hoping to come back for my 8th time soon.

Year 9
Biosciences Day

Secondary School Activity

We welcomed **1,480 learners on campus** across:

- 24x Higher Education workshops
- 5x Maths workshops
- 4x Spoken Word literacy workshops
- 3x Science Days
- 2x GCSE Maths Revision Conferences
- 2x GCSE English Revision Conferences

In school, **we engaged with 2,649 learners through our Aspirations Curriculum and 106 learners on sustained Rapid Group Reading interventions.**

Furthermore, we **invited six students from Ash Manor School to enter the UK Youth Rocketry Challenge (UKROC) regional finals.**

The team were mentored by University engineering students, with all materials and costs funded by the Widening Participation & Success Team.

This activity was delivered as an enrichment opportunity in collaboration between the University of Surrey and Ash Manor School, with construction days taking place both on-campus and in-school.



[Left]
Students from Ash Manor School with their rocket ahead of the UKROC Regional Finals

Schools Partnership Launch

On Thursday 10 October 2024, the University of Surrey formally launched the first **Surrey STARS secondary school partnerships** with Ash Manor School, Carrington School, Kings Academy Easthampstead Park, Kings College Guildford, Merstham Park School, Moon Hall School, Oriel High School and Reigate School.

Hosted at the University of Surrey, and presented by Kerry Matthews (Chief Student Officer), representatives from each participating school received a plaque; symbolising the partnership and data sharing agreements between the University and respective school and signifying the continued commitment and collaboration to raise GCSE attainment amongst eligible learners.

Richard Lake

The partnership has opened opportunities and aspirational experiences that our students may otherwise not experience. Each year group, from 7-12, has activities which are strategically in place to support the students' level of development and understanding of the university experience.

The partnership takes away financial barriers to aspirational settings, allowing students from all socio economic backgrounds to engage in the activities. The impact on students' aspirations has been a major driver in the development of the partnership.

**Kings Academy
Easthampstead Park**



*[Right]
Surrey STARS School
Partner plaques on display*

*[Left]
Richard Lake receiving the
Surrey STARS School
Partner plaque, on behalf of
Kings Academy
Easthampstead Park, from
Kerry Matthews (Chief
Student Officer)*



Scan Me



Read more about the
Schools Partnership Launch

Surrey Scholars

Surrey Scholars is our award-winning extracurricular programme for learners from Year 9 to Year 13, providing support with GCSEs and post-16 and post-18 education choices. We deliver sustained engagement activity that further informs learners of their future study options by providing impartial advice and guidance.

Pre-16 activity

We delivered three Surrey Scholars programmes for pre-16 learners. Each activity consisted of a minimum of eight engagements, split across on-campus and online. Our hybrid model enables learners, and their families/supporters, to participate through a series of live events and on-demand content, ensuring that activity can fit around other responsibilities and commitments.

Parent/carer

I feel as a family, we are more informed. I love the fact this programme is for the whole family so that it encourages us to learn and support each other which is very important.

Year 9
Family Futures

In total, **we worked with 210 pre-16 learners** across the following activity:

Year 9 Family Futures

A family engagement activity from January to March

- 59 families completed the series
- 3x campus events featuring subject workshops
- Weekly webinars featuring wellbeing and study pathways

Year 10 Realise Your Potential

Student engagement activity from January to March

- 60 students completed the series
- 4x campus events featuring subject workshops
- 4x pathway webinars presented by alumni
- 4x GCSE revision masterclasses

Year 11 GCSE Revision Masterclasses

GCSE preparation series from October to February

- 91 students completed the series
- 2x campus featuring tuition
- 6x English GCSE webinars
- 6x Maths GCSE webinars

[Left]
One of our Surrey Scholars at the Graduation ceremony for Year 10 Realise Your Potential. Our Graduation ceremony invites participants and their families to celebrate their completion of the sustained activity after 8 weeks of subject workshops, GCSE revision and careers and pathways advice.



Year 12 Summer Schools

We hosted two Year 12 Summer Schools across June and July. Each summer school provided application and student finance advice and offered subject strands and research projects in: Biosciences, Business, Engineering, Physics with Maths and Space, Law, Psychology and Veterinary Medicine.

Our **Residential Summer School welcomed 139 participants** on campus across four nights and five days. The week consisted of lectures, seminars and practical workshops, in addition to evening social activity.

We later hosted **127 participants online through our Virtual Summer School**. This week invited participants to access content through our digital platforms, with live and on-demand content, mentoring and group social events available.

Dasha

I'm really glad that I took part in the summer school and AIM4University as they made me feel welcome and supported at the University. I am now at the end of my second year at Surrey and really enjoying studying Veterinary Medicine here.

UG Veterinary
Medicine

AIM4University

We worked with **98 participants** on our advice, information and mentoring activity from September to November. In support of completing their UCAS application and preparing for higher education, participants are presented with four ways to engage: interacting with a student mentor, tuning into live webinars, downloading digital resources and/or receiving a travel bursary to a University of Surrey Open Day.



[Right]
Dasha was
previously a Surrey
Scholar and now
studies at the
University of Surrey

Scan Me

Read more about
Dasha's story



Community outreach

We work with, and engage, community stakeholders in advertising our opportunities and raising awareness of the information, advice and support available to learners in understanding their education options. We also deliver tailored activity for specific communities.

How Clean is Your Classroom?

Teacher

We had 2 GRT children attend. 1 has since talked about going to study to be a vet.

Walsh Junior School

In partnership with the Race Equality & Minority Achievement Team (REMA) within Surrey County Council, we delivered a multi-engagement biosciences project across 4x primary schools with higher than average Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) population. Taking place in May 2025, we worked with **176 pupils, 15% of which were GRT** across our in-school workshop, on-campus lab session and project presentation to parents/carers.

Big Leaf Summer School

Participant

These were beautiful days.

We hosted our annual non-residential summer school with the Big Leaf Foundation. Across 3 days, we welcomed **23 refugee and asylum seekers** to engage with Surrey Police, to meet local faith leaders and to exercise their creativity through spoken word. After 3 years, the impact of this collaboration is becoming increasingly evident beyond the visits, with participants completing their GCSEs and progressing into further and higher education respectively.

Discover University Summer School

In collaboration with the Higher Education Outreach Network (HEON), we hosted **60 summer school participants**, aged 14-16 years, on our annual 4-day, 3-night residential in July 2025. Staying in University of Surrey student accommodation, the timetable included engineering workshops on Stag Hill campus, a trip to Merrist Wood College, activity delivered by guest speakers from University of the Creative Arts and Royal Holloway, plus an afternoon of volleyball and climbing at Surrey Sports Park.

[Left]
Discover University Summer School participants warming up before their volleyball session at Surrey Sports Park



Surrey Widening Access Conference

On Wednesday 11 June 2025, we hosted our inaugural conference, welcoming **125 delegates** to hear and learn more about the challenges and barriers in widening access amongst under-represented demographics and communities.

The core of the event invited delegates to attend workshops relating to Care Leavers, Young Carers, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities, Military & Service Children and Refugees & Asylum Seekers, with both UCAS and the Student Loans Company presenting on Free School Meal applicant data and financial support respectively. Delegates also heard from former and current University of Surrey students sharing their personal stories as part of a panel Q&A.

The day was bookended by keynote speaker, Richard McCann, who delivered a memorable and rousing presentation.

Delegate

*Credit to the
organisers ... one
of the best
conferences I've
attended!*

Surrey Widening
Access Conference

[Below]

Delegates at the Surrey Widening Access Conference



[Right]

Richard McCann
delivering his keynote
presentation

Scan Me

Read more about the Surrey
Widening Access Conference



Find out more



WIDENING PARTICIPATION AND SUCCESS

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

The Widening Participation & Success Team works towards the access and success targets as outlined within the University of Surrey's Access & Participation Plan, which is approved and regulated by the Office for Students (OfS).

We track HE progression rates using the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) to monitor and report on our impact whilst we use University of Surrey outreach, admissions and continuation data for internal reporting. All data published is correct as of 30 September 2025.

Planning and delivery of our 2025/26 programme of activity is already underway. To learn more about our programmes, events and activity, or if you would like to work with us, please contact and/or follow us. We would love to hear from you!

CONTACT US



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web: outreach.surrey.ac.uk



socials: [@SurreyWPS](https://twitter.com/SurreyWPS)



*[Left]
A Year 9 student from Oriol High
School performing their spoken
word in our TV studio, as part of
our Speak Up! Speak Out!
workshop*



Thank you

We would like to recognise the contribution of our friends and colleagues over the 2024/25 academic year.

University of Surrey

- Faculty of Arts, Business & Social Sciences
- Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences
- Faculty of Health & Medical Sciences
- Chief Students' Office
- Recruitment & Admissions
- Strategic Planning
- Surrey Sports Park

Surrey STARS

- Ash Manor School
- Bishop David Brown School
- Carrington School
- Chertsey High School
- Fullbrook School
- Kings Academy Easthampstead Park
- Kings College Guildford
- Merstham Park School
- Moon Hall School
- Oriel High School
- Reigate School
- Therfield School

Surrey Scholars

- Brightside Mentoring
- Pathway CTM
- Principal Exams (UK) Ltd.
- GCSE English Consultancy

Collaborative Partners

- Big Leaf Foundation
- Higher Education Outreach Network
- Race Equality & Minority Achievement Team

Surrey Widening Access Conference

- Action for Carers Surrey
- COSMOS Ltd.
- ICan Academy
- Refugee Education UK
- SCiP Alliance
- Student Loans Company
- UCAS



*[Right]
Year 12 engineers
on our residential
summer school*

Scan Me

Read our Access &
Participation Plan



