Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Year Two
Widening Access and Participation Statement

This statement applies to students enrolling on undergraduate programmes at the University of Essex Online.

1.1 Vision and Aims

Our continuing vision is to become a world leader in online learning, making higher education accessible to anyone with the potential and drive to succeed. The pursuit of this vision is underpinned by our core values:

- **Integrity** - We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards in everything we do.
- **Knowledge** - We offer expert resources to help you achieve your academic and career best.
- **Support** - We give you the tools you need to succeed.
- **Opportunity** - We open doors and broaden access to education.
- **Results** - We’re dedicated to helping you achieve your goals – we succeed when you succeed.

In pursuit of our vision our approach has always been to provide educational opportunities for those who may not have been able to access higher education (HE) at the traditional time or in the traditional way.

1.2 Flexible part-time provision

We ensure that all our provision is offered on a part-time modular basis incorporating support arrangements, including a Leave of Absence policy in addition to the traditional Intermission arrangements; this allows our students to take time out of their studies if needed to deal with life events that may affect their ability to engage with their studies.

This flexibility provides greater accessibility to higher education to those students who are in full-time employment, have family or other dependents and therefore cannot take time out to attend a traditional face to face provision on campus.

We also offer regular start dates, meaning that students have the choice of when to commence their studies and can schedule their start date in line with employment or other commitments and time-frames.

1.3 Tuition Fees

We recognise that the cost of HE is a prohibiting factor for many people. We offer multiple payment options to help students spread the cost of their course and manage their finances.

Our Admissions Advisers are also trained to assist applicants with their loan application if applicable.

1.4 Financial Support

We offer a range of financial support including scholarships, bursaries and a hardship fund.
1.5 Access and Admissions

We are committed to fair access and we encourage applications from all those who demonstrate the potential to succeed on our programmes.

We offer an open entry route for those applicants who may be entering HE for the first time, or returning to education after a significant break and who may not have traditional entry qualifications. An assessment of work experience is undertaken by our academic team which informs a holistic assessment of each individual application. Thus, applicants are considered on their merits and experience regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs, affiliations or other irrelevant distinctions.

1.6 21-Day Money Back Guarantee

Applicants who are entering/re-entering education are often unsure about making a significant commitment in both time and finances. We therefore offer a unique 21-day money back guarantee. This allows applicants to experience the first three weeks of the programme and if they decide that they don’t wish to continue they can withdraw and receive a full refund.

2 Student Support

We are mindful that students experience many challenges when studying online and we have invested heavily in our Student Support team and resources to provide a range of services to help students overcome any difficulties that they may face.

Students enrolling on our programmes are assigned a dedicated Student Adviser who will, wherever possible remain with them throughout their studies. The Student Adviser is able to get to know the student and become familiar with their situation so that they can offer the most relevant and effective advice and guidance to help them gain the most from their studies.

2.1 Learning and Development

We offer learning and development support to all students, and in particular, those who are entering HE for the first time or returning after a significant break.

Examples include:

- Access to a VLE which is user friendly.
- Access to a Welcome Week and Induction led by the Student Adviser
- Access to study skills resources and materials in the form of the Student and Tutor Academic Resources (STAR) page of the VLE, supporting the transition to studying higher education.
- Access to a Study Skills Manager to provide formative feedback on study skills.

2.2 Partnership

We are an affiliate college of the University of Essex, and as such our curriculum is informed by their research-intensive and research-led approach to education.