

Access and Participation Statement 2026/27

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Reviewed/recommended by	Academic Board
Final approval by	Board of Directors
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Next review	At least annually from the date of publication, and earlier following any material change to provision, students, evidence or regulatory requirements

REGULATORY STATUS

VSBT was formed in 2025 and is preparing an application for registration with the Office for Students in the Approved category. This Statement does not state or imply that VSBT is already registered, that its courses are designated for student support, or that the OfS has approved the content of this Statement.

1. Purpose and institutional context

Veritas School of Business & Technology (VSBT) is committed to widening access to higher education and enabling students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds to participate successfully, achieve positive outcomes and progress to employment, entrepreneurship or further study.

This Statement sets out VSBT's commitment and initial arrangements for equality of opportunity across access, on-course participation and progression. It is prepared for VSBT's intended application to the OfS in the Approved category and addresses initial and ongoing Condition A2. Condition A1 and an OfS-approved access and participation plan do not apply to the Approved category. Under Condition A2, VSBT must provide the Statement with its registration application, publish it in an easily accessible place for current and prospective students and the wider public, and update and republish it annually. The OfS checks publication and accessibility but does not approve the Statement's substantive content.

VSBT's confirmed planning basis is one annual September intake beginning in September 2027, with up to 20 students on each of two proposed Pearson HND programmes: Business and Hospitality Management. Delivery is planned as a hybrid, comprising 60 per cent on campus and 40 per cent online, with 60 guided learning hours for each 15-credit unit and an annual tuition fee of £6,185. VSBT has not yet obtained Pearson centre or programme approval and will not advertise an approved course, make offers, take deposits, recruit or enrol students until the relevant written approvals and readiness gates are complete. HND Health and Social Care Practice, Level 3 provision, apprenticeships and university-franchised provision are later-stage proposals outside this Statement's launch assumptions.

2. Commitment to equality of opportunity

VSBT will promote equality of opportunity by identifying and reducing barriers affecting access, on-course participation, continuation, completion, attainment and progression. It will pay particular attention, where supported by lawful and reliable evidence, to mature learners; students entering through non-traditional routes; students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds; disabled students; care-experienced or estranged students; students with caring or substantial employment responsibilities; commuting students; and other groups shown to face a material risk to equality of opportunity. Protected characteristics and wider EORR-related characteristics will not be treated as interchangeable, and VSBT will avoid assumptions about individuals based only on group membership.

Admissions and support arrangements will be fair, transparent, consistent and proportionate. VSBT will make reasonable adjustments, recognise prior learning where appropriate, provide clear material information before an applicant commits, and ensure that disclosure of a disability or support need does not disadvantage an application.

These commitments operate alongside the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy, Student Support and Welfare Policy, Personal Tutoring Policy, Academic Engagement and Attendance Policy and relevant consumer-protection arrangements.

3. Evidence base and new-provider position

As a newly established provider, VSBT does not yet hold a mature institutional dataset from which to calculate reliable access, continuation, completion or progression gaps. It will not present sector data, planning assumptions or the experience of individual governors and staff as VSBT institutional performance.

Initial priorities will be informed by the OfS Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR), relevant national and local evidence, the expected applicant profile, consultation with prospective students and stakeholders, and verified application and recruitment evidence. VSBT will consider which of the 12 sector-wide EORR risks are relevant to its prospective and current students, how risks may interact and what proportionate mitigation is feasible. After enrolment, VSBT will establish verified baselines and revise priorities as reliable cohort evidence becomes available.

Small cohorts will be interpreted cautiously. Reports will explain data limitations and will apply disclosure controls so that individuals cannot be identified. Quantitative evidence will be considered alongside applicant and student feedback.

4. Priority equality-of-opportunity risks and responses

The following initial assessment is proportional to VSBT's planned provision and small-cohort context. It prioritises EORR risks presently judged most relevant to the proposed cohort and delivery model; omission from the table does not mean that another EORR risk has been assessed as impossible. The annual review will reconsider all 12 EORR risks. Actions described as planned will not be reported as implemented until supporting evidence is retained.

Priority risk	Why it may matter at VSBT	Initial response and evidence
Knowledge and skills	Applicants may enter through non-traditional routes or return to study after a break.	Publish entry criteria; use fair assessment and RPL; diagnostic assessment, induction and academic-skills support. Evidence: admissions decisions, diagnostics, referrals and first-assessment review.
Information and guidance	Applicants need reliable information on approval status, course content, delivery, fees, finance and outcomes.	Controlled website and offer information; trained admissions staff; applicant feedback and information-accuracy checks.
Application success	Unexplained differences may arise between applicant groups.	Monitor applications, offers, conditions, acceptance and enrolment by relevant characteristics; review criteria and decision consistency.
Choice and delivery	The initial portfolio is limited and students may have work, travel, disability or caring constraints.	Explain the approved timetable and mode accurately; assess accessibility and reasonable adjustments; monitor withdrawals linked to scheduling or location.
Academic support	Students unfamiliar with HE study may be at greater risk of disengagement or underachievement.	Induction, personal tutoring, study-skills support, early engagement monitoring and targeted action; record uptake and impact.
Personal and mental-health support	Financial, health, family or employment pressures may affect engagement and continuation.	Clear referral routes, trained staff, reasonable adjustments and external signposting; monitor themes without inappropriate diagnostic inference.
Cost pressures	Fees, travel, digital access and living costs may affect continuation.	Disclose all material costs; offer approved payment arrangements and, if funded, transparent hardship/bursary support; monitor withdrawals linked to finance.
Progression from HE	Students need preparation for employment, entrepreneurship or further study.	Embed employability, employer engagement and careers guidance; establish destination evidence for eligible cohorts.

5. Initial objectives and monitoring measures

During the pre-enrolment period, VSBT will establish and test the systems, data definitions, service standards and governance records needed to evaluate access and participation honestly. From the first September 2027 cohort, it will establish verified baselines for access, transition, engagement, continuation, completion and progression as data become available. Numerical outcome targets will be approved only when supported by reliable evidence or clearly labelled planning assumptions; absence of mature data will not prevent VSBT from setting and monitoring measurable implementation milestones.

Objective	Measure and evidence	Review and accountability
Fair access	Applications, offers, conditions, acceptance and enrolment, analysed overall and, where lawful, meaningful and safe, by protected and EORR-related characteristics actually collected. The analysis will include decision consistency, missing data and reasons for non-progression through the admissions funnel.	Termly; Admissions Manager and Head of Quality; Academic Board oversight.
Successful transition	Induction completion, diagnostic needs, support referrals and early student feedback.	For each cohort at pre-entry, induction and an early review point approved in the academic calendar; Programme Leaders and Student Support Committee.
Engagement and continuation	Attendance, academic engagement and assessment submission as leading indicators; continuation as the outcome measure.	At the approved operational reporting frequency after enrolment; Programme teams and Academic Board through the Student Outcomes Report.
Completion and attainment	Completion, pass rates and grade profiles, with proportionate subgroup analysis.	Assessment cycle and annually; Assessment/Progression and Academic Boards when cohorts exist.
Support effectiveness	Access, timeliness, uptake and reported usefulness of academic, welfare and reasonable-adjustment support.	Termly; Student Support Committee and Quality & Enhancement Steering Committee.
Positive progression	Employment, further study, entrepreneurship and other valid destinations for eligible cohorts.	Annual when data are available; Careers/Employer Engagement Lead and Academic Board.
Student voice	Applicant and student feedback, representation, focus groups and evidence of actions communicated back.	Termly and annual; committee minutes and action log.

6. Access, admissions and transition

VSBT will provide clear, accurate and accessible information about Pearson and OfS approval status, entry requirements, course structure, the 60:40 delivery model, timetable, location, 60 guided learning hours per 15-credit unit, the £6,185 annual fee, any additional costs, financial-support eligibility, support, complaints and material-change protections before an applicant commits. A deposit must not be stated or charged unless its amount, contractual treatment, cancellation rights and refund rules have been formally approved and published.

Selection decisions will follow published criteria and be recorded so that consistency can be tested. Prior learning and relevant experience may be considered through the approved RPL arrangements. Applicant data will be reviewed for unexplained patterns, subject to data quality and minimum-group safeguards.

Pre-entry guidance, induction, digital orientation and diagnostic activity will help students understand higher education expectations and identify support needs early. Provision of these activities must be evidenced before they are described publicly as operating services.

7. Participation, student success and support

VSBT will use personal tutoring, academic-skills support, accessible learning resources and early intervention to support participation and success. Attendance and engagement data will be used as leading indicators to prompt supportive contact, not as substitutes for final outcome measures.

Students will be able to request reasonable adjustments and accessible information. Support decisions will respect confidentiality and data-protection requirements. Where specialist support cannot be provided internally, VSBT will maintain clear and current referral or signposting arrangements.

Any bursary, hardship or other financial-support scheme will be described publicly only after its budget, eligibility criteria, value, application process, decision authority and review mechanism have been formally approved.

8. Progression and employability

VSBT will support students to understand progression opportunities through curriculum-based employability, employer engagement, careers information and guidance on further study. The College will avoid claims about graduate outcomes until valid destination evidence exists.

When eligible cohorts complete, progression evidence will be reviewed alongside course, student-characteristic and contextual information. Findings will inform programme monitoring, employer-engagement activity and the annual review of this Statement.

9. Student and prospective-student involvement

Before the first cohort enrolls, VSBT will seek proportionate input from prospective students, community or employer stakeholders and staff with relevant student-support experience. The consultation method, participants, themes and resulting changes will be recorded.

After enrolment, students will inform implementation and annual review through surveys, representation, focus groups, committee participation where appropriate, complaints and support feedback. VSBT will communicate actions taken in response and will seek participation from groups whose voices may otherwise be less visible.

10. Data, evaluation and reporting

The Data, KPI & Reporting Policy and Student Outcomes Monitoring Policy provide the institutional framework for collection, validation, analysis and reporting. The Quality Cycle and Assurance Manual and Annual Monitoring & Review Policy provide the route through which findings lead to actions and assurance.

For each intervention VSBT will identify the equality-of-opportunity risk or locally evidenced barrier, affected group, rationale, inputs, activity, delivery evidence, intended short- and longer-term outcomes, success measures, owner, review point and decision rule. Evaluation will test reach, fidelity of implementation, student experience and outcomes, while recognising the limits

of causal inference in small cohorts. Where evidence does not demonstrate the intended effect, VSBT will revise, stop or replace the intervention and record the decision and rationale.

Data will be collected, linked, retained and disaggregated only where there is a defined purpose, lawful basis, approved access control and a meaningful and safe reporting method. Reports will state definitions, coverage, missingness, small-number suppression, intersectional limitations and the distinction between association and demonstrated impact. No individual will be identified through published small-cohort reporting.

11. Governance and accountability

Operational owners will maintain evidence and report exceptions through the relevant committee. The Student Support Committee and Quality and Enhancement Steering Committee will review implementation and intervention effectiveness. Academic Board will scrutinise access, academic participation and student-outcome evidence and recommend priorities. The Board of Directors will approve the public Statement, resources and material revisions; receive annual assurance; and require corrective action where implementation, outcomes or evidence are inadequate. These responsibilities remain subject to the executed governance documents and Scheme of Delegation.

Actions will be recorded with an owner, deadline, success measure and evidence of closure. Material risks or persistent gaps will be escalated through the institutional risk-management route and reflected in programme and college annual monitoring reports.

12. Publication, accessibility and annual review

Following Board reapproval, this Statement will be published on an easily accessible public webpage before the registration application is submitted. The verified webpage URL will be entered in the OfS application and retained in the publication record with the publication date, version and accessibility check. Publication will not imply that VSBT is registered or that the OfS, Pearson, the OIA, the Student Loans Company or a university partner has approved VSBT or its provision.

Responsible contact: Registrar, info@vsbt.co.uk. VSBT will record requests for alternative formats and provide an appropriate accessible version within its approved service standard.

The Principal, supported by the Registrar and Head of Quality, will initiate review early enough for Board approval and republication no later than 12 months after the previous publication. An earlier review is required after a material change to the registration application, provision, delivery model, fees, student profile, evidence base or regulatory requirements. The review will consider performance, prospective-student and student input, intervention evaluation, complaints, equality impacts, resource sufficiency and implementation evidence. The publication record will retain the superseded URL or archived version, approval date and a summary of material changes.

13. Related VSBT documents

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy
- Student Support and Welfare Policy

- Personal Tutoring Policy
- Academic Engagement and Attendance Policy
- Student Outcomes Monitoring Policy
- Data, KPI & Reporting Policy
- Quality Assurance & Enhancement Policy
- Annual Monitoring & Review Policy
- Quality Cycle and Assurance Manual
- Terms and Conditions, Student Protection Arrangements, and applicable refund and compensation policies

Only approved, current and internally consistent versions should be linked from the published Statement. Superseded or inaccurate versions must be withdrawn from public use under the document-control process.

