



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2026-2029

www.ect.ac.uk
+44 0203 582 1389

1. Introduction



The Engineering College of Technology (ECT) is committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive learning and working environment in which all students, staff, governors and stakeholders are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and can participate fully in the life of the institution.

ECT recognises that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are fundamental to academic excellence, student success, innovation and good governance. As a specialist higher education provider delivering engineering and technology programmes through a fully online model, ECT serves an international community of students and staff with diverse backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and aspirations. EDI is therefore not only a legal and regulatory responsibility, but a core element of ECT's mission and values.

This Strategy sets out ECT's approach to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion between 2026 and 2029. It provides the strategic framework through which ECT will continue to remove barriers, promote opportunity, foster belonging and support positive outcomes for all members of its community.

The Strategy should be read alongside ECT's wider policy and governance framework, including the Access and Participation Statement, Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, Student Support Policy, Scholarship Policy, Academic Regulations and associated governance arrangements.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Strategy is to:

- › establish ECT's institutional commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- › promote a culture in which diversity is valued and respected;
- › support fair and equitable access to opportunities;
- › identify and reduce barriers to participation, progression and success;
- › promote accessible and inclusive learning and working environments;
- › support compliance with relevant legislation and regulatory expectations;
- › provide a framework for monitoring progress and continuous improvement.



3. Scope

The Strategy applies to:

- › All students
- › Prospective students
- › Staff
- › Governors and committee members
- › Contractors and consultants acting on behalf of ECT
- › Individuals participating in ECT activities and services

The Strategy applies across all aspects of ECT's operations, including:

- › admissions and recruitment;
- › learning, teaching and assessment;
- › student support;
- › scholarships and financial support;
- › employment and professional development;
- › governance and decision-making;
- › external partnerships and engagement activities.

4. Legislative and Regulatory Context

ECT is committed to meeting its obligations under equality and human rights legislation to promoting good practice across all areas of operation.

In implementing this Strategy, ECT will have regard to:

- › Equality Act 2010;
- › Human Rights Act 1998;
- › Data Protection legislation;
- › Office for Students regulatory requirements;
- › OfS guidance relating to access, participation and student outcomes;
- › Quality Code Advice and Guidance;
- › Relevant sector good practice.

ECT recognises that equality is not achieved solely through compliance. The institution seeks to create environments, systems and practices that actively support participation and success for diverse groups of students and staff.

5. Our Context

ECT's student population differs from that of many traditional campus-based universities. As a specialist online provider:

- › many students study part-time;
- › many are mature learners;
- › many combine study with employment and family responsibilities;
- › students may be located across multiple countries and time zones;
- › students represent a wide range of nationalities, cultures, ethnicities and educational backgrounds.

Current student data demonstrates significant diversity within the student population, including strong participation from international students and students from Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse backgrounds. Student cohorts also include learners with declared disabilities and learning differences who require reasonable adjustments and tailored support.

ECT also recognises the continuing underrepresentation of women within engineering disciplines and the broader engineering workforce. Promoting participation and success in engineering education for underrepresented groups remains an important institutional objective.

This context shapes ECT's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and informs the priorities established within this Strategy.



6. Strategic Principles



ECT's approach is founded on six principles.

6.1 Fairness

All students and staff should be treated fairly and consistently and have equitable access to opportunities and support.

6.2 Inclusion

ECT seeks to create an environment in which all members of the community feel valued, respected, supported and able to contribute.

6.3 Accessibility

ECT is committed to ensuring that its online learning environment, resources, services and processes are accessible and inclusive.

6.4 Respect

ECT promotes respectful engagement, freedom of expression within the law, academic freedom and professional behaviour.

6.5 Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Actions and initiatives will be informed by data, feedback, research and institutional evidence.

6.6 Continuous Improvement

ECT will regularly review practice, monitor outcomes and implement improvements where barriers or inequalities are identified.

7. Strategic Objectives

Objective 1: Promote Equitable Access and Participation

ECT will seek to widen participation and improve access to higher education for students from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds.

ECT will:

- › maintain fair and transparent admissions processes;
 - › support widening participation objectives;
 - › use scholarships and financial support mechanisms appropriately;
 - › identify and reduce barriers to participation where these are identified;
 - › promote opportunities to groups traditionally underrepresented in engineering education.
-

Objective 2: Deliver an Inclusive and Accessible Learning Environment

ECT will provide learning, teaching and assessment environments that are accessible, inclusive and supportive of diverse learner needs.

ECT will:

- › maintain accessible online learning platforms;
 - › provide reasonable adjustments where required;
 - › support inclusive curriculum and assessment design;
 - › ensure accessibility is considered within learning resources;
 - › monitor student feedback relation to inclusion and accessibility;
 - › support students with disabilities and learning differences.
-

Objective 3: Support Student Success and Positive Outcomes

ECT will seek to identify and address barriers that may impact student continuation, progression, completion, attainment or experience.

ECT will:

- › monitor student outcomes;
- › review continuation and completion data;
- › consider differential outcomes where sufficient data exists;
- › use student feedback to identify areas for improvement;
- › provide targeted support and intervention where appropriate.

Recognising ECT's relatively small student cohorts, analysis will focus on identifying trends and risks rather than relying solely on statistical comparisons which may not be meaningful at small cohort sizes.

Objective 4: Foster an Inclusive Culture and Sense of Belonging

ECT will cultivate an environment in which diversity is valued and all members of the community are treated with dignity and respect.

ECT will:

- › encourage inclusive and respectful behaviours;
- › support effective student representation;
- › promote meaningful student and staff engagement;
- › promote equitable employment practice throughout the employee lifecycle, including recruitment, induction, development, promotion and retention;
- › support flexible and inclusive working practices;
- › promote diversity of perspectives within leadership, governance and decision-making structures;
- › support staff development, wellbeing and belonging;
- › consider cultural diversity within institutional activities and communications;
- › maintain processes for addressing complaints, concerns and unacceptable conduct.

ECT recognises that an inclusive student experience is supported by an inclusive workplace culture. The College is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion through the employment lifecycle and will continue to develop its understanding of workforce diversity, staff experiences, wellbeing and career development opportunities as the institution grows.

Objective 5: Strengthen Evidence, Monitoring, Accountability and Governance

ECT will strengthen its understanding of quality-related issues through improved monitoring, reporting and governance arrangements.

ECT will:

- › improve data quality and disclosure rates where appropriate;
- › monitor student and staff diversity data;
- › undertake annual equality monitoring activities;
- › consider equality implications during major decision-making processes;
- › ensure appropriate oversight through existing governance structures.



8. Equality Impact Assessment

ECT recognises that institutional decisions can have different impacts on individuals and groups.

To support inclusive decision-making, ECT will implement a proportionate Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

Equality Impact Assessments will normally be considered when developing or significantly revising:

- › strategies;
- › major policies;
- › significant student processes;
- › substantial curriculum changes;
- › major organisational initiatives.

ECT's EIA process will be proportionate to the institution's size and complexity and will focus on identifying potential impacts, considering mitigating actions and supporting informed decision-making.

9. Governance and Accountability

Responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion is shared across the institution.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for oversight of this Strategy and for receiving assurance regarding ECT's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Programme Committee

Programme Committees contribute programme-level monitoring and identify opportunities for enhancement and improvement.

Academic Board

The Academic Board is responsible for oversight of academic inclusivity, student outcomes, academic regulations and related student experience matters.

Managers and Staff

All staff are expected to contribute positively to ECT's inclusive culture and to support the implementation of this Strategy through their respective responsibilities.

Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee

The Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee is responsible for monitoring matters relating to learning, teaching, accessibility, student feedback and quality enhancement.

10. Monitoring and Reporting

Progress against this Strategy will be monitored through ECT's existing committee and reporting structures.

Evidence may include:

- › student demographic data;
- › student outcomes data;
- › continuation and completion rates;
- › complaints and appeals information;
- › student feedback;
- › staff diversity data;
- › scholarship and access data;
- › outcomes of Equality Impact Assessments where applicable.

ECT will continue to utilise its Annual Equality Monitoring Report as the primary institutional mechanism for evaluating equality, diversity and inclusion performance, identifying risks, monitoring compliance and informing future priorities.

The report will normally include:

- › progress against this Strategy and associated action plans;
- › analysis of student equality data and student outcomes;
- › workforce equality data and workforce trends;
- › recruitment, promotion, retention and staff development monitoring;
- › complaints, harassment, bullying and discrimination data;
- › disability inclusion and reasonable adjustment monitoring;
- › legal and regulatory compliance matters;
- › significant equality risks and emerging issues;
- › recommendations for improvement and areas requiring investment or Board attention.

The Annual Equality Monitoring Report will normally be considered through the academic governance structure before being presented to the Board of Governors as part of the institution's annual assurance framework.

ECT will monitor equality-related risks through its governance, quality assurance and risk management processes. Significant equality, accessibility, inclusion or discrimination-related risks will be reported and managed through established governance arrangements.

As this Strategy is expected to be introduced during the 2026/27 academic cycle, the first full monitoring report aligned to the revised strategic objectives will be produced following a full year of implementation and data collection.

11. Review

This Strategy will be reviewed annually through ECT's monitoring arrangements and formally revised every three years, or earlier where required due to regulatory, organisational or strategic change.

Annual review activity will consider:

- › implementation progress;
- › equality monitoring outcomes;
- › student and staff feedback;
- › emerging risks;
- › regulatory developments;
- › institutional priorities.

