

University of Essex

Access Agreement 2011-12

The University of Essex Access Agreement has been updated in October 2010 to include new tuition fee and bursary provision for 2011 entry and account for the University Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA) 2008-09 to 2011-12.

This Access Agreement is for 2011-2 only, to align with the WPSA and in light of the Browne Review.

1. Context

The University of Essex is academically a strong institution, with an excellent reputation for both teaching and research. It also has a long-term commitment to widening participation and access. Since its establishment in 1964, the University has encouraged applicants from non-traditional routes, particularly mature students and applicants with disabilities and has delivered a significant amount of targeted outreach activity to groups currently underrepresented in higher education.

Further information on the University Widening Participation Strategy is provided in Section 1 of the University's WPSA 2008-09 to 2011-12.

In recent years the University has established strategic partnerships to increase student access to its provision in the region.

Our various partnerships have been designed to expand the range of provision across the region, and have led to increased collaboration in course development and design in order to address two of the key barriers to participation – geographical isolation and the perception of the increasing cost of participation in higher education.

Further information on the University's regional partnerships is provided in section 1.2.3 of the University's WPSA, 2008-09 to 2011-12.

Details of the bursary schemes and outreach commitment for South Essex College and Colchester Institute are included within this Access Agreement. University Campus Suffolk and Writtle College have their own Access Agreements.

2. Intended fee level

The University of Essex tuition fee for 2011 entry will be £3,375 per annum for all full-time undergraduate degree courses, including courses of study that lead to the award of the Higher Education Certificate or a Foundation degree.

The University will charge the standard fee, £1,345 in 2011, for the preliminary year (Year 0) only of a four-year scheme which includes a foundation year. All subsequent years will be charged at the maximum fee.

3. Bursary provision

Note that all bursaries are offered as cash bursaries for course related costs.

3.1 Bursary provision at the University of Essex (Colchester, Loughton and Southend campuses)

The University wishes to ensure that no student is deterred from applying to Essex on the grounds of financial hardship. For 2011-12 the University is planning to spend 15.1% of its additional variable tuition fee on student financial support and outreach activities.

New students for 2011 entry

The University bursary scheme for 2011 will support students in greatest financial need. The figures below are for all new students entering in 2011 entry, with the exception of students engaged in the preliminary year (Year 0) of a four year degree for which the University will offer

a fee waiver, charging only the standard fee. These students will not qualify for the University of Essex Bursary during the preliminary year but will be eligible for a bursary in all subsequent years of their study.

Household Income Threshold	Bursary Amount
Up to and including £25,000	£700

Continuing Students

Continuing students who started in 2009/10 and 2010/11 entry will follow the bursary scheme originally offered:

- **For students with residual household incomes below £25,000 per annum**

The University will provide a £469 bursary in addition to the Government Higher Education Maintenance Grant of £2,906 a year, giving a combined total of £3,375.

- **For students whose residual household incomes are between £25,000 and £34,000 per annum**

The University will provide a bursary to ensure combined University and Government support of £3,375 each year.

- **For students whose residual household incomes are between £34,000 and £50,020 per annum**

The University will provide a bursary, tapering off on a sliding scale, so that students at the upper household income point will receive no additional state or institutional support above the basic Student Loan.

- **For students engaged on the preliminary year (Year 0) of a four-year degree scheme that involves a foundation year**

The University will offer a fee waiver, charging only the standard fee. These students will not qualify for any other University of Essex Bursary funding during the preliminary year.

Note that all of these residual household incomes for calculating Bursary thresholds are based on current funding models that exist as provided by the Government, and should there be a substantial change in policy, these residual household income levels will be altered to reflect the changes.

3.2 Other bursary provision

For 2011-12 the University will also be providing the following bursary schemes.

Care Leavers Bursaries

The University will provide up to 24 bursaries of £1,000 for new and continuing students who have experience of being in care.

Study Abroad Bursaries

The University recognises that a significant barrier for students being able to have a period of time studying abroad is cost. Students in receipt of a University bursary will be eligible to apply for a bursary of £1,000 for a full year abroad and £750 for a part year abroad in 2011-12.

Helena Kennedy Foundation

In 2011-12 the University will support one bursary as part of the Helena Kennedy Foundation, supporting disadvantaged students who have overcome significant barriers in order to continue their education to University level.

The University also offers a number of non means-tested scholarships. For details and eligibility criteria please see <http://www.essex.ac.uk/studentfinance/>

3.3 Bursary provision at South Essex College of Further and Higher Education

South Essex College intends to offer a bursary scheme that recognises the particular demographic profile of its students, who are predominately from the south Essex area. Bursary schemes funded by additional income from variable fees will operate for the students on degree schemes offered at the College.

3.4 Bursary provision at Colchester Institute

Colchester Institute intends to offer bursary support that reflects the nature of its student body. Support will be targeted at those from low-income households, and for students who opt to pursue vocationally orientated Foundation degrees.

3.5 Bursary provision at UCS

For details of the UCS bursary scheme, see UCS Access Agreement.

4. Outreach activities

The University of Essex intends to focus outreach activities in three areas:

- Targeted outreach during the pre-application phase
- Support to applicants with disabilities
- Employment skills and careers guidance

4.1 Pre-application support

The University runs an extensive programme of outreach activity, both as centrally identified activity and activity embedded across the University's faculties and professional services.

An audit of all widening participation outreach activity was recently carried out and details on the range and scope of activity is provided in Appendix D of the University WPSA, 2008-09 to 2011-12.

Additional activity

For 2011-12 the amount of *additional* outreach activity will be increased. In particular the University will continue to provide and support activity for the local schools and colleges that have been part of the Aimhigher programme.

In 2011-12 the University will use *additional* tuition fee income to support one outreach post already established as part of the University Access Agreement and support three outreach posts, previously funded as part of Aimhigher.

The pre-application activity will aim to raise aspirations, achievement, and awareness of higher education amongst disadvantaged groups and provide pre-application and transition guidance for targeted students from targeted schools and colleges. This *additional* outreach activity will include:

Subject master classes, taster days and campus visits

IAG in schools and colleges

Summer Schools

Retention and transition activity

Insight into HE Event

Local authority 6th form events programme

Primary schools project

Outreach support for Learning Shop activities

Outreach and transition activity targeting students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties

Outreach support for the Colchester Academy

Realising Opportunities Project

Participants will be targeted as below:

- Students from socio-economic groups 4,5,6 & 7
- Students from lower income backgrounds
- Students from low participation neighbourhoods
- Mature Students
- Students with a disability
- Looked after children

Investment will also be made in evaluating the impact and outcomes of the pre-application outreach activity to ensure maximum impact and effectiveness and inform the development of future activity.

4.2 Supporting applicants with disabilities

The University has a strong record of recruiting students with disabilities and of actively developing and promoting higher education opportunities for students with disabilities. The University works to ensure that students are given appropriate guidance on the support available to help them reach their full potential whilst at Essex or at other higher education institutions.

Additional activity

University outreach and student support staff will work in partnership with partner FE institutions to provide students, parents and carers and special educational needs coordinators with information and advice for students with a disability accessing higher education. The events will build upon existing links that have been established as part of the Aimhigher programme.

The University will also fund additional administrative support to the Disability Team in the Student Support Office. This will enable student support needs to be identified and actioned earlier in the application cycle, and also provide on-going support for students with disabilities to help their progression and retention. In particular it will enable staff whose primary role is providing support to students with Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) in place to also support students who are not eligible for, or who have not yet claimed, DSA.

In addition the University will continue to enhance pre-entry disability guidance and support for students across Essex and Suffolk through the work of the Access Centre, which conducts assessments prior to commencement of a degree (either at Essex or another higher education institution) for applicants across the Eastern region. Further review and enhancement of this provision is planned for 2011.

4.3 Employment skills and careers guidance

The University has invested in the provision of graduate careers guidance and, through the University JobShop, worked to ensure job opportunities for those who need to support their studies financially with work that fits around their university commitments. The JobShop has found many students part-time employment to support their studies. The opportunity for students to undertake paid employment whilst studying is a crucial factor in retention and enables students, who are from backgrounds where there is limited financial support available from their family, to access alternative means of meeting their living costs.

Additional activity

The University has established a student work placement scheme called 'Frontrunners'. The scheme is designed to encourage students who need additional income to fund their studies to work on campus in a variety of roles linked to a Personal Development Plan. Participating students develop high-level workplace skills which will enhance their eventual employability. Additionally, working on campus is thought to be less disruptive to their studies and will help to retain students who might otherwise not complete their course of studies because of financial

pressures. A variety of placements are available based in academic departments, in administrative sections and in the Students' Union. The University will use additional fee income to fund a proportion of Frontrunners placements relative to the number of students eligible for state support.

5. Provision of information to students

The University provides financial information to applicants and students through a number of different mechanisms:

- i. Information on the University bursary and other scholarships is provided in all pre-application material. This includes information in the University prospectus and a dedicated area in the newly formed student finance area of the University website. In addition information is distributed at all pre-applicant events, including higher education fairs, careers evenings and school/college presentations, directing students to this specific area of the website.
- ii. Education outreach staff deliver higher education finance presentations, which include the availability of bursaries and scholarships, in a large number of schools and colleges throughout the year.
- iii. Provision of information to the UCAS web-based course search facility on fees and funding.
- iv. At the applicant Visit and Interview Days parents and carers of applicants are given information on all areas of higher education student finance, including detail on the University bursary scheme, other scholarships and completing the application for funding support.
- v. Following registration the Student Support Office provide support to individuals for any bursary related enquiries.
- vi. Students are provided with a central email address to contact for any bursary queries, both prior to and following registration.

6. Milestones

The University of Essex intends to demonstrate its progress towards meeting its widening participation targets through the use of the annual HEFCE/HESA benchmarks. Through its bursary and outreach activities, the University intends to meet, and where possible exceed, benchmark performance figures.

Figures indicate that the University meets or exceeds its benchmark figures in most cases:

Category	Actual proportion at Essex	Benchmark
Young full time first degree entrants from state schools (08/09)	95.9%	91.7%
Young full time Under 21 years on first degree from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7 (08/09)	38.9%	34.4%
Young full time first degree from low participation neighbourhoods (08/09)	16%	11.1%
Mature full time students on first degree from low participation neighbourhoods (08/09)	20.5%	12.7%
Young full time first degree from low	10%	9.8%

participation neighbourhoods, who fail to progress to second year of course (07/08)		
Mature full time students on first degree with no prior HE experience, who fail to progress to second year of course (07/08)	13.8%	13.2%

Specific milestones relating to the *additional* outreach activities detailed in Section 4 are provided below (see Appendix D, WPSA 2008-09 to 2011-12 for all outreach activity):

Pre-application support	Target Group
Deliver a minimum of 80 events on campus for target groups including campus visits, taster days, master classes and insight days.	Students from socio-economic groups 4,5,6 & 7, low income backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods.
Attend a minimum of 100 higher education awareness, information and careers events in targeted schools and colleges, engaging with both students and parents.	Students from socio-economic groups 4,5,6 & 7, low income backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods.
Deliver a minimum of 5 targeted events/activities a year specifically to support access and the transition to higher education for mature students.	Mature students
Deliver a minimum of 2 targeted events a year specifically to support access to higher education for young people who are in care.	Young people in care
Deliver 5 sessions as part of the Colchester Children's University project.	Students from socio-economic groups 4,5,6 & 7, low income backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods.
Deliver a minimum of 30 student finance talks or activities in schools and colleges or as part of on campus activity.	Students from socio-economic groups 4,5,6 & 7, low income backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods.
Deliver a minimum of 2 residential experiences to provide an introduction to academic experience and student life.	Students from socio-economic groups 4,5,6 & 7, low income backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods.
Provide informative and clear student finance information for applicants on the University website, in University publications and through university staff delivering talks and carrying out budgeting exercises as part of the outreach programme.	All applicants

Support for applicants with disabilities	
Deliver a minimum of two targeted events a year specifically to support access to higher education for students with a disability.	Students with a disability
Maintain the work of the Access Centre to provide additional assessments of need for disabled applicants and students	100 applicants with disabilities from across the Eastern region
Development of a suite of targeted information packs (print and web-based formats) for applicants with specific disability needs (e.g. dyslexia) prior to and after confirmation of results in August. Use of electronic applicants files to automate processes and ensure targeted information is available to all students who disclose a disability on the UCAS application.	Applicants with disabilities
Ongoing development of targeted induction programmes for students with disabilities (e.g. dyslexia workshops, campus tours for students with mobility disabilities)	Students with disabilities
Enhancement of services to students with disabilities without DSA including drop in dyslexia, mental health and study strategies sessions and workshops with 50 specialist drop in sessions and workshops per year.	Students with disabilities

7. Monitoring

Fulfilment of the Access Agreement will be monitored as follows:

- **University Key Performance Indicators**
See section 2.3 of the WPSA
- **Education Outreach and Widening Participation Strategy Committee**
The Committee maintain a monitoring responsibility for the University Access Agreement.
- **University Steering Group**
The annual monitoring report will be considered by the University Steering Group before being submitted to OFFA.

Further details on widening participation monitoring across the University are in Section 2.3 and 2,4 of the University WPSA 2008-09 to 2011-12.

Colchester Institute

Amended November 2010

Bursary Provision at Colchester Institute

Colchester Institute will offer Bursary support that reflects the nature of its student body. Support will be targeted at those from low-income households.

Colchester Institute Bursary

Colchester Institute will provide a means tested Bursary to students with a household income below £34,000 equivalent to the full tuition fee when combined with government support. For students with an income between £34,000 and £50,000, a means tested Bursary will be provided on a sliding scale.

Foundation Degree Progression Bursary

For students studying a full-time Foundation Degree and progressing to the final year of an honours degree, there will be a non-means tested Bursary paid in three instalments. The bursary will be discontinued from 2011 but instalments will continue to be paid to students enrolled in academic year 2010-2011 or earlier who meet the qualifying conditions as described below:

- The first instalment will be paid at the end of the first term of the second year after the census return to students completing the first year of a Foundation Degree
- The second instalment will be paid at the end of the second year of study to students who successfully graduate with a Foundation Degree
- A final instalment will be paid to graduates from the Foundation degree who progress to the third (top-up) year of the honours degree programme. This will be paid at the end of the first term after the census return.

South Essex College of Further and Higher Education

(November 2010, to take effect from September 2011 entry)

South Essex College intends to offer a bursary scheme that recognises the particular demographic profile of its students, who are predominately from the south Essex area. In addition our bursary schemes are intended to promote internal progression from the College further education provision and to emphasise the importance that the College places on its foundation degree provision.

The Low Income Bursary

This will consist of £400 to each student whose household income is assessed to be less than £25,000. This bursary will decrease on a sliding scale for household incomes between £25,001 and £52,020. It is estimated that 40% of students will qualify for the full bursary and a further 60% of students will receive a partial bursary. The combined cost of these two bursaries is estimated at 25% of the additional revenue generated by the variable fee income.

The FE College Bursary

This will take the form of a non-means tested bursary of £300 in the first year of entry to any student who registers for a degree programme at the College within one year of completion of their studies at a state school or further education college. It is estimated that more than 50% of students will benefit from this bursary.

The Foundation Degree Bursary

This will take the form of a non-means tested bursary of £400 for any student who registers for a foundation degree programme at the College. The bursary will be payable for both year one and year two of the foundation degree and to those students who progress to the third (top up) year of the honours degree programme.

These bursaries will be subject to the annual inflationary increases announced by the Government (assuming the variable fee also increases in line with the annual inflation rate). Means tested thresholds will also increase in line with any Government announcements.

Edge Hotel School

Working with the education foundation Edge and education provider Kaplan, the University is developing a unique hotel school on the Colchester Campus. Edge is dedicated to raising the status of practical and vocational learning so all young people can reach their potential.

The school will be dedicated to practical and vocational education and the development of the future leaders of the hospitality industry. Industry professionals together with student managers will run the hotel. The industry 'masters' will nurture the students' aspiring talent, knowledge and skills. This is an innovative way to develop the mastery necessary to prepare individuals for successful careers with leading hospitality organisations.

Edge Hotel School will offer students a two year accelerated honours degree and is proposing to charge a fee of £3,375 per year for students entering in 2011-12 (April 2012). Due to the nature of the programme and its offer, Edge Hotel School students are not included under the general University of Essex student financial support packages. A more appropriate model and programme has been developed specifically for the Hotel School students, suitable for the practical and vocational learning focus of the course. For the first cohort of students entering in April 2012, UK (Home) students with a household income up to and including £25,000 will be provided with a bursary of £350 for every year of their study.

The Edge Hotel School and its academic programmes have been developed to attract students from all backgrounds and provide a vocational learning opportunity for students who may otherwise not be able to access and achieve a degree level award.

In order to provide access and high level employment opportunity to students the Hotel School will provide the following:

- a) A total fee for the degree of £6,750 over two years, representing a significant saving over many comparable programmes both in the absolute cost of the programme but also in the additional year of earnings and reduced living costs compared to a traditional three year programme.
- b) Students will be learning by doing, working with real hotel guests and will be highly regarded in the hospitality sector to ultimately secure graduate jobs with excellent employers and excellent career prospects.

We will seek to recruit students from all backgrounds looking for students with a real passion for the industry.

The course provision through the Edge Hotel School represents excellent value for students and great employment prospects