ACCESS AGREEMENT 2012-2013

1   Introduction

1.1   College vision and mission

The vision of the organisation is to operate as a responsive and strong college providing high quality skills, learning and training in state of the art facilities to our diverse customer base of learners and employers. The College seeks to meet the needs of key local employment sectors in line with the college's overall mission, 'Raising your skills, improving life chances'.
The College's strategic intentions document for 2011-2014, 'Entitled to Excellence' comments on our '...enduring and successful relationships with Bath Spa University, University of Bath and University of the West of England. Through these relationships we work together to widen participation in higher education through the delivery of a range of popular programmes.'

1.2   College background

City of Bath College is a general further education college of small to medium size catering for 6,000 learners, 2,000 of which are full-time. The organisation is located in the centre of the city with properties adjacent to an area west of the railway station. It is close to the retail centre and to all major roads out of the city to the industrial estates and beyond. The college is well-known and respected by employers much further afield than the city boundaries.

The College is committed to offering progression opportunities and to widening access in order to improve learner participation rates which facilitate the development of those life and employability skills which ultimately affect potential for personal success. Higher Education is an integral part of this fundamental organisational belief.

Central to this commitment is the expansion of Higher Education activity in a range of academic and work based skills development areas as well as the optimisation of funding streams alternative to those available in mainstream Further Education. The longer term aim is the creation of a comprehensive suite of Higher Education subject pathways which can be pursued in the environment of a general Further Education institution.

The College has a dedicated Higher Education teaching team with staff predominantly, in some cases, exclusively, delivering Higher Education programmes within the Further Education environment. This ensures that teaching staff are uniquely expert both in terms of their Higher Education capacity and with respect to their experience of managing and delivering Higher Education programmes within the Further Education sector. Some staff regularly write academic research papers and subsequently present these at Higher Education conferences and this type of work serves to enrich the learner experience as well

as lend additional credibility to the Higher Education capability of the College. This has undoubtedly contributed to the College's success in securing additional Higher Education programmes in partnership with HEI's and other examining bodies.

The College currently works with local HEIs – the University of Bath, Bath Spa University and the University of the West of England. For HNC/D programmes, the College continues its relationship with Edexcel.

Partnership with HEIs includes collaboration with other Further Education colleges through the University of Bath Division for Lifelong Learning, the Bath Spa University initiated Wessex Partnership and the University of the West of England's Federation.

1.3   Student Profile

The college has over 400 Higher Education learners studying on a wide range of Under-Graduate programmes extending from Sports and Coaching through to Heritage Management and from Engineering through to Business. Many students (over 150) are studying part-time and provision includes Higher National programmes, Foundation Degrees and Top Up programmes.

2   Tuition fee Limits and fee income above £6000

Programme title	Proposed fee for 2012/13	Awarding University/body
Foundation Degree In Computing Year 1	£7500	University of Bath (licensed)
Foundation Degree in Computing Year 2	£2195	University of Bath (licensed)
BSc Computing	£7500	University of Bath (licensed)
Foundation Degree in Contemporary Design Crafts Year 1	£6000	Bath Spa University
Foundation Degree in Contemporary Design Crafts Year 2	£2195	Bath Spa University
HNC Music Performance	£5000	Edexcel
HNC/D Building Services Engineering Year 1	£2500	Edexcel
HNC/D Building Services Engineering Year 2	£1098	Edexcel
HNC/D Building Services Engineering Year 3	£2500	Edexcel

2.1   Courses covered by this agreement

Although tuition fees for all HEFCE directly funded provision are listed in the attached Appendices, this agreement will only cover the Foundation Degree in Computing and the BSc in Computing as this provision is in excess of £6000.

2.2   Students included within this agreement

This agreement applies to all home and European students studying the Foundation Degree in Computing and the BSc in Computing programmes at City of Bath College.

Students who are classified as overseas learners will pay a separate tuition fee; details are available from the College's International Office.

2.3   Agreement renewal

This agreement will be valid for a period of one year with effect from September 2012 and will be reviewed ahead of the 2013/14 academic year.

3   Financial support

The College recognises that a key barrier to entering Higher Education is cost. This factor figures strongly in student selection of an institution offering Higher Education programmes that they wish to pursue. City of Bath College is highly committed to widening participation and believes that access to the bursary scheme will be a significant encouragement to these students.

3.1 Bursary arrangements

A proportion of the income received from student tuition fees will be used to create Higher Education bursaries for those students identified as being located in postcode areas within the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This amount will not exceed £450 per academic year per eligible student and application for a bursary will be made by individuals through the Student Finance section of the College.

Bursaries will operate independently of the National Scholarship Programme (NSP), for which, at present, the College has not received any allocation from HEFCE.

3.2 Investment in teaching and curriculum

Income generated by the increase in fees will also be used to invest further in teaching and curriculum and other support processes. In particular, the College will allocate funding to improve the retention and success rates of Higher Education students through improved quality assurance mechanisms and by effecting appropriate actions to improve these rates further when deemed appropriate.

4   Expenditure on additional Access measures

Within the remit of this agreement, the College considers that it currently has a low proportion of under-represented students on relevant programmes and therefore, in keeping with the broad guidelines noted by OFFA, proposes to spend 30% of fee income received above £6000 per each FTE. This equates to £450 per full time learner or around £16,200 based on the estimated number of learners likely to access the programmes covered by this agreement.

5   Additional Access measures (outreach, retention and success, financial support)

Outreach activities - the College recognises that any outreach work must be targeted and this is reflected in the milestones identified in Annex B to this agreement. The College plans to undertake a number of outreach activities during and beyond the life of this agreement covering the following broad areas:

- Improving information, guidance and support for DSA applicants
- Further development of collaborative links with schools and possible progression to HE programmes offered by the College

- Continuation of the summer school programme for aspiring HE Computing learners
- Facilitating the progression of Level 3 apprentices to HE Computing programmes.

Retention and success – in addition to attracting more learners to HE Computing programmes, the College is intent on improving retention and success rates. In order to achieve this, the College plans to disperse funding in order to:

- Identify quality alerts at an early stage in order to prevent retention and subsequent success rate issues
- Further develop the quality assurance framework for Higher Education that the College has initiated during the course of the 2010/11 academic year
- Ensure that under-performing HE programmes are subject to robust quality audit processes
- Effectively capture the student voice with respect to HE programmes and to take necessary actions to address issues raised
- Provide an HE environment which is conducive to effective under-graduate study, facilitates the necessary discursive ethos and nurtures future success
- Develop retention strategies tailored to the needs of specific programmes which subsequently promote higher rates of success
- Provide HE teaching and support staff with the professional development activities that allow them to identify retention issues and to take the necessary corrective actions.

Financial support – at present, the College has not been allocated funding against the National Scholarship Programme (NSP). However, the institution will provide financial support for students through the bursary arrangements noted in 3.1 above. Whilst it is recognised that bursaries have not significantly influenced students' choices of institutions under the current system, the College believes that some form of financial incentive will positively affect learner selection of their place of study under the increased tuition fee arrangements, coupled with the inevitable consideration that studying at home might be financially preferable to studying away.

6   Targets and Milestones

The College has identified a number of targets and milestones which can be viewed in detail at Annex B. These targets and milestones cover a range of areas which are generally designed to improve access to HE provision in the College as well as encourage and facilitate applications from a wider group of aspiring learners. The selection of these targets is based on the key areas of:

- Improving provision of information, advice and guidance for prospective HE learners
- Developing support and guidance for DSA applicants
- Further developing collaborative links with feeder institutions
- Encouraging the desire to progress to HE via summer school activities
- Facilitating progression from work based learning programmes to HE
- Improving the quality of HE provision with an emphasis on retention and success rates
- Provision of financial support for prospective students suffering hardship
- Monitoring and evaluating the progress of bursary arrangements within the College.

7 Institutional monitoring and evaluation arrangements

City of Bath College will monitor the performance of this Access Agreement in order to report on progress made against the milestones referred to in the relevant appendices to this Agreement. A senior manager of the College will be responsible for writing and submitting the Annual Report to the Director of OFFA subject to the approval of the College Strategic Leadership Group and the Finance and Resources Committee of the College Corporation. In addition, regular reporting and monitoring will occur monthly in the case of the former and bi-monthly in the case of the latter and this will be subject to scrutiny by the relevant recipients with actions noted and followed up through subsequent formal reporting procedures.

8 Provision of information to prospective students

Detailed information will be provided to students about tuition fees that apply to Higher Education programmes and the financial support via bursary arrangements available. This information will be available on the College website, within the addenda to the College Under-Graduate Prospectus, programme guides and at interview. This information will include a statement outlining the College's ongoing commitment to provision of bursary arrangements, accessible to those learners who appropriately meet the criteria. The student's offer letter will also specify the fees due for the duration of the programme. Other means of providing tuition fee information will be through Student Services, open days and other College learner events.

Institution name: City of Bath College

Institution code: L105154

Institution UKPRN: 10001465

Table 5 - Milestones and targets

Table 5a - Statistical milestones and targets relating to your applicants, entrants or student body (e.g. HESA, UCAS or internal targets)

Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximium)
				2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Low-income backgrounds	Further develop advice and support for HE applicants and increase number of applications especially from low income backgrounds.	2011	No data	Systematic programme of support to be established in March 2012 including attendance at UCAS Fair, April 2012. Increase HE applicants by 10% in 2012/13.	Continue to encourage applications via attendance at UCAS Fair in April 2013. Improve HE applications by further 5% in 2013/14.	Increase HE applications by further 3% in 2014/15.	Increase HE applications by further 2% in 2015/16.	Increase HE applications by further 2% in 2016/17.	
Disabled	Improve and refine support and guidance for DSA applicants.	2011	No data	Increase applications by 5%. Develop on-line DVD with specific reference to DSA support by September 2012.	Increase applications by a further 3%.	Increase applications by a further 2%.	Increase applications by a further 1.5%.	Increase applications by a further 1.5%.	
Applications	Develop on-line DVDs covering HE at the college.	2011	No data	Increase website hits by 15%.	Produce version 2 of DVDs to include student profiles; Increase number of website hits by 10%	Increase number of website hits by 10%	Produce version 3 of DVDs; Increase number of website hits by 5%	Increase number of website hits by 5%	

Applications	Facilitate progression from Level 3 apprentice programmes to Foundation Degree Computing.	2011	No data	First Level 3 apprentice is successfuly placed on FD Computing in September 2012.	Double number of Level 3 apprentice applicants on FD Computing programme.	Recruit at least 3 Level 3 apprentice applicants.	Recruit at least 3 Level 3 apprentice applicants.	Recruit at least 3 Level 3 apprentice applicants.	
Low-income backgrounds	Introduce bursary scheme and evaluate this at end of first year of operation.	2011	No data	50% take up of possible bursary payments; operation of scheme seen as succesful via review.	60% take up of possible bursary payments.	Continued successful deployment of bursary facility.	Continued successful deployment of bursary facility.	Continued successful deployment of bursary facility.	
Low-income backgrounds	Provide accurate and timely information to students regarding dispersal of bursary payments.	2011	No data	80% of students are satisfied with bursary information supplied.	85% of students are satisfied with bursary information supplied.	85% of students are satisfied with bursary information supplied.	90% of students are satisfied with bursary information supplied.	90% of students are satisfied with bursary information supplied.	

Table 5b - Other milestones and targets

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around your outreach work (including collaborative outreach work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access. These should be measurable outcomes based targets and should focus on the number of pupils reached by a particular activity/programme, or number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.

Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximium)
				2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Develop further collaborative links with schools with respect to HE provision.	2011	No data	Increase number of collaborative links by 15%; Undertake evaluative review with schools by April 2013 and formulate action plan.	Increase number of collaborative links by 15%; 75% of actions from previous plan are completed.	Increase number of collaborative links by 10%; remaining 25% of actions are complete; new actions in place.	Increase number of collaborative links by 5%; 80% of outstanding actions are complete.	Increase number of collaborative links by 5%; remaining outstanding are complete; new actions formulated.	
Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	Continue to offer summer school programme for aspiring FD Computing students.	2010	12 learners in 2010.	Widen target audience to cover 15% of applicants from disadvantaged post code areas.	Attract further 10% of applicants from disadvantaged post code areas.	Attract further 10% of applicants from disadvantaged post code areas.	Maintain numbers from disadvantaged post code areas.	Maintain numbers from disadvantaged post code areas.	
Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	Further enhance employer engagement in Foundation Degree Computing.	2011	Number of employers involved in student work-based projects.	At least 2 employers are involved in work-based assignment assessment.	At least 3 employers are involved in work-based assignment assessment.	At least 4 employers are involved in work based assignment assessment.	At least 5 employers are involved in work based assignment assessment.	At least 5 employers are involved in work based assignment assessment.	
Management targets	Ensure college HE provision is of highest quality to maximise learner success and progression opportunities.	2011	2010/2011	Improve retention and success rates by 5%; Provide dedicated HE facilities wef January 2012.	Improve retention and success rates by 3%.	Improve retention and success rates by 3%.	Improve retention and success rates by 2.5%.	Improve retention and success rates by 2%.	