

ACCESS AGREEMENT

Contact Information

Principal contact for OFFA

Title	<u>Mrs</u>
First name	<u>Ann</u>
Last name	<u>Tate</u>
Post held	<u>Rector</u>
Telephone	<u>01604 892001</u>
e-mail	<u>vanessa.sulch@northampton.ac.uk</u>

Senior manager responsible for access agreement

Title	<u>Prof</u>
First name	<u>Peter</u>
Last name	<u>Bush</u>
Post held	<u>Pro Rector Academic</u>
Telephone	<u>01604 892840</u>
e-mail	<u>vanessa.sulch@northampton.ac.uk</u>

1. Background

University College Northampton is the only higher education institution in its county and for over 30 years has been providing high quality programmes of study at undergraduate and post graduate levels in both full time and part time mode. Whilst like all other HEIs, UCN attracts students from national and international constituencies, its undergraduate full time student population is drawn mainly from within a 60 mile radius of its two campuses in Northampton. In recent years it has achieved considerable success in attracting students from non-traditional backgrounds into higher education as demonstrated by HEFCE/HESA performance indicators. (See Appendix A.)

That success notwithstanding, as a teaching-led institution UCN aims to achieve outcomes significantly better than its benchmarks, not only for recruitment of non-traditional students but also for retention of those students.

2. Current marketing and outreach activity aimed at the recruitment of non-traditional students

UCN's widening participation strategy has a broadly based definition of access and inclusion. Unlike institutions which fail to meet their benchmarks, UCN does not focus its access activity exclusively on school-age participants. Rather, UCN seeks to attract adult learners both in relation to full-time participation, and those already in work for whom part-

time study is more appropriate. Activities with school-age potential students are undertaken in collaboration with Aim Higher which is located at the Park Campus of the University College, and in partnership with schools in the county under the HE alliance umbrella. We are also active in our role in fostering progression opportunities for students who may currently be in Further Education and in work. We have a range of 'top up' programmes in partnership with the three FE Colleges in the county, with Milton Keynes College, Peterborough College and Colleges in the wider East Midlands region. We are active in the development of Foundation Degrees to meet regional skills needs and also in support of skills and continuing professional development in the public sector. Our strength in this activity has been underlined by the awarding of additional student numbers for Foundation Degrees. All our Foundation Degrees have progression opportunities available to full honours degrees.

3. The process of setting fees and bursaries at UCN

In engaging in the fee/bursary setting process, the institution adopted the following key objectives:-

- Setting a fee which is competitive but which will provide resources for infrastructure investment to enhance the student experience and to enhance financial sustainability.
- Support for students on full maintenance grant.
- Support for students on partial maintenance grant. It is perceived that these students could also be deterred by the high cost of higher education and with limited state support may be 'trapped'
- Support for students from within the region whether living at home or in UCN / Northampton accommodation for whom going to work is a clear alternative to the high costs of a three year degree course.

The final decision in relation to the fee and bursary arrangements was taken by the Governing Council following an extensive programme of consultation with significant stakeholders both internal to UCN and in our wider constituencies. As an access orientated institution with a commitment to reducing barriers to participation UCN was anxious to ensure that fees were not set at a level which would discourage potential entrants to higher education. Nevertheless we were also acutely aware of the needs of the institution for investment to underpin a high quality learning experience for our students.

4. Fees and Fee Limits.

UCN is proposing to set the following fees and fee units

Fee	£2,500 for Bachelors courses. £1,200 for Higher National Diplomas and Foundation Degrees
-----	--

Fee Limit	£3,000
-----------	--------

Fees will be charged to students commencing their programme of study in September 2006 and thereafter. Students applying in 2004/5 for a deferred place will not be charged top up fees for any part of their programme of study. Fees will be raised in line with inflation, on an annual basis. Students

will be advised that they can expect a rise in the level of fees of no more than 5%.

Students who enrolled on Foundation Degrees or Higher National Diplomas in 2004/5 and 2005/6 will only be charged £1,200 for a top up year in 2006/7 or 2007/8 respectively. Students enrolling from the Art Foundation course will be charged £1,200 in 2006/7. Students currently enrolled or enrolling next academic year will be provided with the relevant information to enable them to make their decisions in respect of a top up year.

The fee of £2,500 will be charged to all full time undergraduate students, Home and EU, on single, joint and combined honours programmes and PGCE students. Top up years will be charged at £2,500. Students who have commenced either a Foundation Degree or Higher National Diploma in 2004/5 or 2005/6 and who progress directly on to a top up degree will be charged £1,200 for the final year. Foundation Degree students and Higher National Diploma students will not be charged top up fees and will pay £1,200.

The fees set out above will apply to all courses at University College Northampton or in one of its partner colleges.

5. Estimate of Additional Fee income

Commercially confidential.

6. The proposed programme for bursaries.

All applicants applying to UCN to study a full time course to which a top up fee has been applied will be eligible to be considered for one of the following:

6.1 Needs Bursary

To ensure that students with the least financial resources are encouraged to apply to higher education UCN will offer a bursary of £500 to all students in receipt of all or part of the maintenance grant. If administratively practical this will be offered as either a fee waiver or cash. It is important to note that 60% of all current UCN students are in receipt of a full or partial fee remission based on their LEA assessment. As UCN will not be charging the £3,000 tuition fee this will in fact give many less well off students a discount of £1,000 compared to other HEIs charging the full amount.

6.2 Regional Bursary

In order to increase the number of applications from the region who might otherwise be attracted to work, it is proposed to offer bursaries to students with a home address in the region or who have attended a regional school or college. Many of these schools and colleges will be within areas of typically low recruitment into higher education and this strategy will encourage participation from under-represented groups. Applicants will be eligible for either a needs bursary or a regional bursary of £500 bursary.

All bursaries will be raised annually by a rise commensurate with the annual fee increase.

6.3 Scholarships

UCN plans to continue to provide scholarships to the most able applicants, both in terms of academic ability and talent in the arts. These will be made available to students to provide assistance with living costs and fees. Some applicants in receipt of scholarships may come from under-represented groups. The funding for the scholarships will not be drawn from tuition fee income but via fund raising through the UCN Foundation.

6.4 Part time students.

UCN is committed to widening access to part time students and recognises that with the introduction of variable fees that part time study may be the only affordable way into Higher Education for some students. Part time students studying for Bachelors degrees to which top up fees have been applied will be charged fees per FTE which are equivalent to the net cost of study for a full time student in receipt of a bursary.

6.5 EU students

EU students will be charged a fee of £2,500 for Bachelors Degrees and £1,200 for Foundation Degrees and Higher National Diplomas.

7 Provision of information to students

Due to the deadline date for publication of the 2006/7 prospectus, UCN will advise students that they should consult the UCN website for up to date information relating to fees and bursaries. Following approval of the Access Agreement by OFFA, the information will be made available on the website and to all applicants in writing with any offer of a place. Once a firm offer is confirmed, each student will be written to, setting out the fees they will have to pay and the bursary scheme. Students will be provided with the basis on which bursaries will be awarded and will be able to judge for themselves whether or not they will be entitled to receive one. This will be the benefit of a relatively simple system. On receipt and confirmation of either their eligibility for the maintenance grant or details of their home address / school attended, each student will have their position verified.

8 Outreach work

UCN will continue to build on its existing outreach work as set out in 2 above. This will include

- Aimhigher. Working closely with Aimhigher and developing further the work already undertaken, this includes the provision of taster days, workshops and master classes targeted at identified widening participation cohorts.
- Supporting Aimhigher by providing accommodation and support services

- Compact Agreements. It is intended to expand the number of schools currently involved in the agreements and to increase the number of students participating and benefiting from the scheme.
- Widening Access and Participation. UCN will achieve its targets each year and build upon the work already undertaken and demonstrated by the fact that UCN, in general, meets the HEFCE benchmarks.
- Establishment and implementation of AP(E)L policy and support structures
- Utilisation of available data sources to target recruitment activity particularly in Northamptonshire.
- Organisation through the HE Alliance of three events for partner school/college staff.
- Completion and dissemination of a good practice guide for supporting non traditional students
- Establishment of a mature students' forum
- Implementation of plans for the development of Foundation Degrees and HND/Cs in collaboration with Partner Colleges.
- Provision by each academic school of a minimum number of school/community liaison events.
- In tandem with Aimhigher and Partner colleges, the development and dissemination of a curriculum mapping exercise to facilitate development of progression opportunities for students opting for a vocational route.
- Strategic plan goals to include the opportunity for each student at UCN to study flexibly at a pace and time to suit their needs and to further diversify the student population so that the institution continues to exceed its benchmarks.

9 Milestones

Baseline data

Within the Widening Access and Participation plan Section 2 relates to activities and targets relating to strategic objectives to develop a targeted outreach/in reach programme to raise aspirations and stimulate interest among groups identified as underrepresented, including those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This section includes benchmark targets for students from specified social classes, low participation neighbourhoods and mature entrants.

- Students from social classes III, IV, V to be 39% for 2005/6
- Young full time undergraduates entrants from low participation neighbourhoods to be 18% for 2005/6
- Mature full time undergraduate entrants with no previous HE from low participation neighbourhoods to be 16% by 2005/6.
- Mature part time undergraduates entrants with no previous HE from low participation neighbourhoods to be 12% by 2005/6.

The milestone will be to at least maintain current benchmark positions and to increase all targets by a minimum of 1% over the next five years. Progress will be monitored annually. As a minimum milestone UCN will equal or exceed the

HEFCE benchmarks in relation to participation of under-represented groups in higher education.

Compact agreements

UCN is developing a revamped progression compact scheme to be launched in the next academic year. A school liaison officer will be appointed with a specific remit to manage this new scheme. In the interim, UCN are offering the same progression compact scheme to schools as last year. The scheme will be offered to students identified by Aimhigher Area Coordinators as widening participation (WP) students. The scheme provides WP students with the opportunity to study a module, Foundations of HE Learning Skills, offered by the Centre for Academic Practice. The module addresses writing and study skills and is assessed by two short assignments. Students will be assessed on a pass/fail basis by the School WP coordinators and, if successful, will be awarded 40 UCAS Tariff Points towards a conditional offer at UCN. Last year approximately 50 students participated in the progression compact scheme; this year scheme is expected to involve 100 students. With the introduction of the revamped programme in 2006, the number of participants is expected to increase.

10 Institutional monitoring arrangements.

Progress in achieving milestones and the evaluation of achievement against targets will be conducted through the institutional planning process. This involved the annual review of achievement against targets included in the strategic plan and sub-sections of the plan, for example the Widening Access and Participation plan. Annual monitoring statements will be produced and sections relating to the milestones contained in the Access Agreement will be addressed in this way.

Sign -off

I enclose the access agreement from University College Northampton.

Name	Ann Tate
Position	Rector
Signed	
Date	16 February 2005

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE NORTHAMPTON
HESA/HEFCE Performance Indicators 2002-03

DRAFT - BASED ON PROVISIONAL DATA FOR 2002/3

Note: * Location adjusted benchmark used for 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03 throughout all tables

1. (Table 1a) Young Full Time First Degree Entrants

1.1 From State Schools/Colleges

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	97(+)	93	87
2001/2002	97(+)	93	86
2000/2001	97(+)	93	86
1999/2000	97(+)	92	85
1998/1999	96(+)	92	85
1997/1998	93	89	82

1.2 From low Social Classes

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	37	34	28
2001/2002	36(+)	32	26
2000/2001	35(+)	31	25
1999/2000	36(+)	31	25
1998/1999	36(+)	31	25
1997/1998	36	31	25

1.3 From low participation neighbourhoods

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	17	14	13
2001/2002	16	14	13
2000/2001	15	14	12
1999/2000	15	15	12
1998/1999	14	15	12
1997/1998	17	15	12

2. (Table 1b) Young Full-Time Undergraduate Entrants

2.1 From State Schools/Colleges

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	97(+)	93	88
2001/2002	98(+)	93	87
2000/2001	98(+)	93	86
1999/2000	97(+)	93	86
1998/1999	96	93	86
1997/1998	93	89	82

2.1 From low Social Classes

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	37	36	29

2001/2002	36(+)	33	26
2000/2001	36(+)	32	26
1999/2000	36(+)	32	26
1998/1999	37(+)	32	26
1997/1998	36	31	26

2.3 From low participation neighbourhoods

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	17	14	14
2001/2002	17	14	14
2000/2001	16	14	13
1999/2000	15	15	13
1998/1999	15	15	13
1997/1998	17	15	13

3. (Table 1c) Young Full-Time Sub-Degree Entrants

3.1 From State Schools/Colleges

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	99	97	97

3.2 From low Social Classes

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	42	44	45

3.3 From low participation neighbourhoods

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	20	18	21

4. (Table 2a) Mature Full-Time Entrants

4.1 First degree entrants - no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhoods

Year	% Mature degree entrants at UCN	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	31 (658)	12	15	14
2001/2002	27 (606)	14	14	14
2000/2001	26 (542)	17	15	14
1999/2000	26 (562)	15	14	14
1998/1999	27 (556)	12	13	14
1997/1998	27 (662)	15	14	12

4.2 All undergraduate entrants - no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhoods

Year	% Mature u/g entrants at UCN	UCN (%)	Benchmark (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	37 (999)	14	16	15
2001/2002	32 (908)	16	17	16
2000/2001	29 (765)	18	16	15

1999/2000	28 (775)	18	15	15
1998/1999	32 (864)	16	15	14
1997/1998	31 (948)	n/a	n/a	n/a

4.3 (Table 2c) Sub-degree entrants – no previous HE and from low participation neighbourhoods

Year	% Mature sub-degree entrants at UCN	UCN (%)	Benchmark (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	57 (341)	17	20	20

5. (Table 2b) Part-Time Undergraduate Entrants

5.1 Young entrants - no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhoods

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	19	21	20
2001/2002	18	20	20
2000/2001	23	20	16
1999/2000	14	13	16
1998/1999	10	17	16
1997/1998	7	16	16

5.2 Mature entrants - no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhoods

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	11	12	8
2001/2002	14	13	8
2000/2001	11	11	7
1999/2000	7	7	7
1998/1999	9	8	7
1997/1998	8	9	7

5.3 All entrants – no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhoods

Year	UCN (%)	Benchmark* (%)	All UK (%)
2002/2003	11	12	8
2001/2002	14	14	8
2000/2001	12	12	-

