

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACCESS AGREEMENT 2008 - 2011

Introduction

1. The mission of Harper Adams University College is 'higher education for the delivery of a sustainable food chain and rural economy'. Its vision is to maintain a high quality University College made distinctive by activities closely related to the needs of the rural economy, a learning environment and student culture that enhance employability and strong industry links that add business relevance to the College's role in higher education and which encourage lifelong learning.
2. The University College has about 1,450 full time undergraduate students. First degree and HND/Foundation Degree programmes are offered at the University College's campus near Newport in Shropshire. Harper Adams is directly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for about 150 students studying on its validated HND/Foundation Degree courses at Reaseheath College in Nantwich, Cheshire. It is these programmes that are the subject of this Access Agreement.

Tuition Fees

3. Harper Adams University College has agreed the following annual tuition fee rates for UK and EU students joining full time/sandwich undergraduate courses at both Harper Adams University College and Reaseheath College in 2008/09:

First degree (BSc/BEng/MEng)	£3,145
HND/ Foundation Degree	£2,732
Sandwich year – all courses	£ 893

4. Tuition fee levels will normally be uplifted each year in line with inflationary increases announced by the government.
5. The University College has separate tuition fee rates for its part time and postgraduate courses and for overseas fee paying students. Information about tuition fee rates is available directly from the University College.

Scholarships

6. Harper Adams University College will continue to use a proportion of the additional fee income to offer scholarships to students, in order to promote access and encourage participation in higher education from under-represented groups.
7. The University College subscribes to the model scheme devised by the Universities UK (UUK)/Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) advisory group. In particular, the University College uses the information that it receives from the Student Loans Company on the residual household income of applicants to determine the level of any scholarship award.

8. In 2008/09, the University College will award annual non-repayable scholarships as follows:

Household income	Harper Adams scholarship
£0 - £17, 910	£1,000
£17, 911 - £28,500	£ 750
£28,501 - £38,330	£ 500
£38,331	£ 0

9. Students will receive confirmation of the award of a scholarship within 15 working days of the University College receiving confirmation of the level of household income from the Student Loans Company.
10. Scholarships will be paid to students, by cheque, in two equal instalments. The first payment will be made in February and the second payment in May.
11. The value of the scholarship award may be increased in line with inflation each year.
12. Students who receive a scholarship in the first year of study will continue to receive a scholarship for the remaining years of study at Harper Adams University College, provided that they remain registered on a full time/sandwich course, they continue to meet the criteria for the award of a scholarship and pass all modules of study in the preceding year, after reassessment.
13. Students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant and who are allowed to progress into the next level of a programme 'carrying' one or more failed modules from the previous level of study or who are repeating a part or a full year of study, will be awarded a minimum Harper Adams scholarship (£310 in 2008/09 and subject to inflationary increases thereafter) . The University College will consider, on a discretionary basis, whether a student repeating some or all of the previous year's studies or carrying failed modules into the next level of study will be eligible for a scholarship. Students will not normally be eligible for a scholarship during the sandwich placement year.
14. The University College also intends to offer scholarships to reward students' academic potential and sporting prowess, as well as to students who, in different ways, can enrich the learning community at Harper Adams. All such scholarships will be awarded on a 'needs blind' basis.

Information to Applicants and Students

15. The University College's approach to differential fees and scholarships will be outlined in the undergraduate prospectus, a more detailed leaflet on fees and scholarships and also through the University College's website. These documents will set out the tuition fees for students, the scholarships available, the criteria for the award of scholarships, how to apply (if appropriate) and methods of payment. It will also illustrate the net costs of studying for different types of students, taking account not only of living costs and fees but the financial support available from both the state and the University and likely levels of income from the placement year.

16. A copy of the College's leaflet on fees and scholarships will be sent to all applicants receiving an offer of a place at the University College. Staff from the University College will also discuss the College's approach towards tuition fees and the availability of scholarships with potential students and their advisers at higher education fairs, visits to (and from) schools and colleges, and also at open days held at Harper Adams.
17. Many applicants seeking admission to a course at the University College are normally interviewed at Harper Adams. During the applicant's visit to Harper Adams, there will be an opportunity to discuss the extent of the financial support that is likely to be available from the University College. Applicants who receive an offer of a place on a course at Harper Adams will also be given the contact details of a member of staff with whom they can discuss their financial circumstances, in confidence.
18. All staff involved in advising students during the recruitment and admissions process, at both Harper Adams and Reaseheath College, continue to receive briefings on the University College's arrangements for tuition fees and scholarships. This will include staff from the Registry, the Liaison and Marketing Unit, Student Services and Finance, most academic staff as well as senior managers.
19. Information about fees and scholarships will also be made available to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC), in order that students can access this information from the websites of UCAS and the SLC.

Outreach Work

20. The University College is committed to promoting access and it is already involved in a number of initiatives to encourage participation in higher education from under-represented groups. These activities have included:
 - A Children's University event at Harper Adams, with 500 year 6 pupils in attendance from the local Telford and Wrekin urban area.
 - A week long Summer School for 50 year 11 pupils to raise aspirations towards higher education.
 - An Easter School at the University College for local primary school pupils.
 - The Higher Education Choices event, attracting almost 300 potential students each year.
 - More than 30 visits into Harper Adams each year, from pupils and teachers at schools and colleges in the region.
 - More than 60 visits each year to schools and colleges by University College staff.
 - Membership of the Midlands post-16 compact scheme (CARD), in which students are encouraged to complete a series of goals while studying a level 3 programme in order to help them progress into higher education.
 - A mentoring project in which students from the University College E-mentor pupils from secondary schools in the Warwickshire area.

21. The University College also provides high levels of post-entry support. All new students are screened, during induction to Harper Adams, to assess whether they might be dyslexic and to gauge the extent to which they will require additional support to develop their numeracy skills. The University College employs four members of staff to provide Learner Support to students.
22. The University College will continue to work towards increasing the number of students from under-represented groups studying at Harper Adams, however, there are no plans to increase our existing outreach and learner support work, which we believe to be appropriately resourced for an institution of this size.

Milestones and Objectives

23. Data compiled by the University College shows that in 2007/08, 79% of its students are drawn from rural areas, with 65% from a farming background. While the University College is committed to attracting students from under-represented groups to study at Harper Adams, this needs to be seen in the context of both the specialist land-based nature of the University College's courses and its rural location in Shropshire. Both these factors might, to some extent, militate against our efforts to widen participation.
24. The milestones and objectives for the University College are set out on page 6 of this Access Agreement. The University College currently draws 58% of its full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7, the largest proportion of any higher education institution in the UK. Moreover, 12% of all undergraduate students are in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance, the fifth highest proportion of any higher education institution in the UK. The University College also has good retention rates, with 92% of first year students in 2006/07 continuing on courses in 2007/08.
25. HEFCE Performance Indicators suggest that the University College is currently less successful in drawing students from low participation neighbourhoods, although there is some doubt about whether students from rurally isolated and disadvantaged backgrounds are correctly identified by the existing methodology.

Monitoring Arrangements

26. The Senior Management Team at the University College will monitor compliance with the Access Agreement and also progress towards meeting the milestones and objectives identified on page 5 of this Agreement, through regular reports to the College Executive. The Academic Board of the University College will also receive an annual report.

Dr N Morrison
Academic Registrar
November 2007

MILESTONES AND OBJECTIVES

	Objectives - by 2010	Milestones - by 2008	Activities	Baseline Position
1.	67% of full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7.	65% of full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued outreach work. • Participation in Aimhigher initiatives. • Targeted and well promoted bursaries. 	61% of full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7 ¹ .
2.	12% of all undergraduate students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance.	10% of all undergraduate students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the Learner Support arrangements. • Diagnostic assessment of students during induction to the College. • Targeted and well promoted bursaries. 	8% of all undergraduate students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance ¹ .
3.	10% of young degree entrants drawn from low participation neighbourhoods.	7% of young degree entrants drawn from low participation neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued outreach work. • Participation in Aimhigher initiatives. • Targeted and well promoted bursaries. • New courses attractive to urban dwellers. 	5% of young degree entrants drawn from low participation neighbourhoods ¹ .
4.	8% of mature full time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of higher education and from low participation neighbourhoods.	6% of mature full time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of higher education and from low participation neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued outreach work. • Participation in Aimhigher initiatives. • Targeted and well promoted bursaries. • New courses attractive to urban dwellers. 	4% of mature full time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of higher education and from low participation neighbourhoods ¹ .
5.	95% progression rate from year 1 to year 2 of undergraduate courses.	94% progression rate from year 1 to year 2 of undergraduate courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted bursaries and other forms of financial support to reduce withdrawal rates on grounds of financial hardship. • Effective learner support. 	92% progression rate from year 1 to year 2 of undergraduate courses ² .

¹ HESA. 2004. Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK.

² Harper Adams University College, Academic Board, 8 December 2004.