

## **Loughborough University Access Agreement (Sections 2 and 4 revised December 2006)**

### **1. Background and Context**

Loughborough University's mission is:

“To increase knowledge through research, provide the highest quality of educational experience and the widest opportunities for students, advance industry and the professions, and benefit society.”

We want our students to reach their full potential regardless of their background before joining the University. It follows that we are committed to ensuring that finance does not present a barrier to the admission and progression of students whilst recognising that we must secure sufficient resources to maintain the high standard of the student experience which we offer in partnership with Loughborough Students' Union.

The University is located adjacent to Loughborough, a prominent high-technology centre for the East Midlands, on an impressive 410 acre campus which is one of the largest in the UK. Our undergraduate degree programmes, many of which have been developed in partnership with employers, are characterised by a combination of relevance to employment and research-led teaching. The majority of courses offer a sandwich year opportunity enabling students to develop their skills further. Where applicable to the discipline, all degrees have received accreditation from the relevant professional body. The nature of many of our courses means that prior knowledge in certain subjects, e.g. mathematics or science, is often required for admission. Our teaching quality is rated amongst the highest nationally and our students have an outstanding record for employability.

The University's location and the distinctive nature of its degree programmes has resulted in an undergraduate student body that is predominately full-time (99%), the majority of whom are young (95%) and living away from home (95%). We recruit nationally and 80% of our 2003 UK intake originates from outside the East Midlands. Loughborough is proud of its record for the admission of students from under-represented groups. Within the limits of the statistical significance of the data, we are already meeting the relevant HESA benchmarks for socio-economic group, low participation neighbourhoods, mature students and students in receipt of Disability Allowance. Some 30% of our students are from less affluent backgrounds (with family incomes of £30,000 or less). Retention rates are high and better than our benchmarks for both young and mature students, regardless of background (only 4% not in HE the year after entry).

### **2. Proposed Fees for UK/EU students for the 2007/08 academic year**

All full-time undergraduate programmes	£3,070
Science & Engineering Foundation Programme (HEFCE-funded)	£3,070
Sandwich placement year	£610 in 2007/08
Full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	£3,070

We plan to continue to increase the fees set out above by inflation for all students for each new academic year after 2007/08.

### 3. Existing Financial Support for Students

The University currently provides access to a range of sources of financial support for full-time undergraduate students:

Source	Nature of support	Total annual value	Estimated annual value to low income students*
<b>Means-tested</b>			
Access to Learning Fund	Entry bursaries up to £1.5k for local mature students	£20.5k	£20.5k
Alumni Development Trust	5 maintenance awards of £2k over 3 years annually to new students	£3.75k	£3.75k
<b>Needs-Blind</b>			
Loughborough specific employer sponsorship	Approx 130 new places each year on sponsored degrees (£1,000 annual bursary)	£390k	£115k
Ministry of Defence	50 sponsored places per year (£4k annual bursary plus 45 x £32 per day training pay)	£815k	£245K
Sports Scholarships	100 scholarships held each year (1/3 new awards), cash value £750	£75k	£22k
Music Scholarships	90 tuition packages net value £150, 3 annual scholarships of £500	£15k	£4.5k

\* defined as those with residual incomes of less than £30k (2003/04 incomes) representing approx. 30% of our student population.

The Alumni Development Trust awards are a transitional arrangement between the Opportunity bursary scheme and the introduction of tuition fees. Taking this into account, the total annual value of the support we anticipate will be available in 2006 to low income students in addition to the new bursary scheme is at least £400k. In addition, around 750 students annually undertake a supported 45 week work experience placement. The annual student income from placements is approximately £9.3m of which £2.8m on average will go to students from low income groups.

### 4. Loughborough University Bursary Scheme

The objectives of our bursary scheme (introduced in 2006/07) are as follows:

- To minimise the financial barriers to entry and progression at Loughborough
- To ensure we retain the proportion of students we currently recruit from under-represented socio-economic groups and low participation neighbourhoods
- To help us to increase the proportion of students from these under-represented groups by the 2010 intake bearing in mind that significant growth in our undergraduate population is not planned
- To aim for a small increase in the existing proportion of mature students amongst our undergraduates

Our bursary scheme for all eligible UK full-time undergraduate entrants from 2007/08 will be as follows. Bursaries of twice the standard value will be offered to mature students. Our experience to date of administering our Access to Learning Funds indicates this is a key group in need of increased financial assistance at Loughborough.

**Annual Loughborough Bursary**

<b>Household Income</b>	<b>Under 21 on Entry</b>	<b>21 or over on entry</b>
Up to £17,910	£1,330	£2,660
£17,911 to £20,000	£1,125	£2,250
£20,001 to £23,000	£ 820	£1,640
£23,001 to £26,750	£ 615	£1,230
£26,751 to £30,250	£ 410	£ 820
£30,251 to £33,750	£ 205	£ 410

A standard bursary will be offered to full-time UK PGCE students as follows, regardless of age on entry to the programme:

<b>Household Income</b>	<b>Loughborough Bursary</b>
Up to £17,910	£305

We have designed our scheme bearing in mind that our location means that our predominately young undergraduate population has no option but to move away from home with the increase in living costs which this inevitably entails. We are particularly concerned that increased tuition fees do not deter our current mature entrants from low income backgrounds, for many of whom, Loughborough represents the only practical opportunity for higher education.

Our ability to recruit mature undergraduate students will always be modest given our location and subject range (e.g. we do not offer programmes in health and social care which attract significant numbers of mature returners). These factors also restrict the viability of offering our programmes on a part-time basis. Currently the University is not meeting its benchmark for the recruitment of this group of undergraduate students and has introduced, therefore, a number of initiatives to increase recruitment from this under-represented group. It is known that mature students can face more acute financial challenges than other groups, and one of the University's initiatives, therefore, has been to offer higher value bursaries to mature entrants who satisfy the eligibility conditions. The University believes that this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The bursaries and household income thresholds set out above will continue to rise at least in line with inflation each year. The bursaries will not be payable in the sandwich year, if taken, and students from the Channel Islands and Isle of Man will not be eligible. We will use information derived from LA assessments of income to determine bursary eligibility. We believe a series of steps in bursary values will make it easier for prospective students to understand their likely entitlement and will be more straightforward to administer. We are informing prospective students of their individual bursary entitlement. Bursaries are paid in three instalments by BACS transfer into student bank accounts.

We will be working in partnership with our Students' Union to enable more Loughborough students to play a key role in our proposed additional outreach activities. We intend to use approximately £110k from our tuition fee income to pay our students for their contribution and we estimate at least 60% of this sum will reach students from under-represented groups. We estimate that our total annual expenditure on bursaries by 2010/11 will be approximately £3.2m with around 3,400 students benefiting from some financial support.

These estimates take into account a small increase in bursary expenditure over the five year period based on achievement of the milestones in section 7.

In addition to the above means-tested bursaries we offer merit-based entry scholarships for particularly able students in a number of science and engineering subject areas.

## **5. Provision of Information to Students**

The University recognises the need to expand its current financial guidance, support and administration arrangements for prospective and current students which operate as a partnership between central University services and the Students' Union. The expanded service will produce clear, comprehensive information in both printed and electronic form covering:

- Total tuition costs for prospective students
- Estimated study and living costs, including sample budgets
- A comprehensive summary of University support including bursaries, scholarships, sponsorship and hardship funds, eligibility criteria etc.
- A brief summary of state support with cross references (e.g. to DfES, AimHigher, Student Loans Company websites etc.)
- References to other possible sources of income, e.g. employment (including our own outreach activities, see Section 7), charitable trusts etc.

The material will be illustrated with case studies and tailored versions created for prospective students, parents and teachers/advisors. It will be integrated with current outreach and recruitment information and be used pro-actively in both central and departmental outreach, student recruitment and admissions activities. In addition to creation of web and paper-based information materials, the service will also provide accessible, confidential advice for individual prospective and current students through the student's choice of medium (telephone, email, face-to face). Initial material and advice will be available for our June 2005 Open Day with the full service introduced in autumn 2005.

Working with information from the Student Loans Company, the unit will be responsible for determining the value of the means-tested awards and making any adjustments due to changed financial circumstances during their studies. In addition, the unit will co-ordinate the University's Access to Learning Fund and other sources of financial assistance.

We estimate that our additional investment in financial advice and bursary administration will be approximately £100,000 per annum.

## **6. Summary of Current Outreach Work**

Outreach work at Loughborough is delivered through a partnership between the central widening participation unit, our Faculties, academic and student support departments and Loughborough Students' Union. We work closely with the other Leicestershire universities, now within the wider framework of AimHigher. We also contribute to aspiration-raising in deprived areas of East London via our leadership of the Dagenham New Technology Institute project. Activity has grown significantly since 2000 and to date Loughborough has mainly targeted the following:

- Local students with no family history of HE
- Local students from lower socio-economic classes and low participation neighbourhoods
- Mature students
- Minority Ethnic Groups

- Students with disabilities
- Increasing achievement and interest in mathematics, science and engineering as well as additional mathematics support for our current students
- Using our unique reputation and facilities for sport to promote the attractiveness of higher education

The above targeting aims to use our distinctive strengths whilst placing emphasis on groups which are significantly under-represented nationally in higher education as well as the particular challenges faced by the University.

#### **Scale of Current Activities (2003/04)**

- Over 2,000 prospective students and their parents have been involved
- More than 40 different schools/colleges have been partners in these activities
- Over 60 current University students have been involved in activities, acting as role models and talking to target groups about their experiences as a university student
- Building on our successful Z-card initiative for A-level Mathematics and Physics, a GCSE Maths card was developed in 2003/04. 315,000 copies were requested and sent out to 1,800 schools for the 2004/05 academic year. 40% of intermediate and higher level GCSE Maths students will therefore receive the card.
- 6 events focussed on demystifying science each involving 30 Year 8 and 9 students
- The Widening Access through Sport project involves 30 students in an ongoing programme of activities utilising both campus facilities and staff expertise
- Commitment to the AimHigher initiative has continued, with a high level involvement in the Leicestershire activities (approximately 1,700 students have been worked with through this initiative) and further involvement on a regional level with Science Summer School activities (over 200 students in three years). Loughborough acts as banker and staff base for East Midlands AimHigher.

A detailed summary document of the Widening Participation activities that have taken place is produced each year for the Loughborough University Widening Participation Monitoring Group (2003/04 report attached for information).

#### **7. Under-Represented Groups at Loughborough and Milestones**

As noted in section 1, within the statistical significance of the data, Loughborough meets its most recent HESA benchmarks for admission of young full-time undergraduate students from less advantaged socio-economic groups (23.5% in 2002) and low participation neighbourhoods (9.2% in 2002). However, over the years our performance has almost always been slightly below the benchmarks and of course the groups concerned remain under-represented nationally in higher education. In addition, UCAS data indicate that we attract slightly fewer ethnic minority student applications and acceptances than the national average for the subjects we offer. We need to undertake further analysis to understand the origin of these differences and we are conscious that there is significant variation in representation of different ethnic groups in higher education nationally.

Loughborough therefore recognises its responsibility to contribute further to raising achievement and aspirations for higher education. In view of the above, our strategy for additional outreach is :

- To maintain intakes of students from under-represented groups at their current levels despite the introduction of tuition fees
- To aim for modest increases in our performance indicators for students from underrepresented groups by the end of the Access Agreement period
- To increase our outreach activities aimed primarily at general aspiration and achievement-raising locally, and to a lesser extent nationally, through expansion of our central widening participation team and increased student involvement

The above aspirations and our milestones need to be considered in the context of the following:

- The considerable uncertainty surrounding the impact of variable tuition fees on demand for places at different institutions and for different subject areas.
- That nationally there has been only limited progress in increasing participation by students from less advantaged social classes and from low participation neighbourhoods since 1998/99.
- That it is most practical for our staff and students to engage with outreach activities in our local, largely non-urban, area. This inevitably limits the amount of work we can undertake with some groups under-represented nationally (e.g. African-Caribbean males).

Loughborough will therefore invest a proportion of its tuition fee income in additional outreach work as well as in its bursary scheme. Although we believe the majority of the impact of the work we undertake will contribute to increased participation in higher education generally rather than specifically at Loughborough, we have set ambitious but, we hope, realistic milestones for increasing further the number of students we admit from under-represented groups. In setting these targets, we are mindful of the challenging national context and that raising aspirations and achievement is a long term project for us all. Assuming current levels of other sources of funding for widening participation remain stable, we estimate that our additional expenditure on outreach activities will be in the region of £284k per year by 2007/08.

**(i) Young full-time first degree entrants**

Indicator	2002 Intake*	2006 Intake	2008 Intake	2010 Intake
% From socio-economic groups 4-7	23.5	24.5	25	26
% From low participation neighbourhoods	9.2	9.5	10.0	10.5

\* HESA Performance Indicators, Table T1a, September 2004

**(ii) Mature full-time first degree entrants**

Indicator	2002 Intake*	2006 Intake	2008 Intake	2010 Intake
% of Intake	5	5.3	5.7	6
% No previous HE & from low participation neighbourhoods	12	14	15	16

\*HESA Performance Indicators, Table T2a, September 2004 – rolling average of previous three years used as small numbers lead to major data fluctuations

**(iii) Participation of Students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)**

Indicator	2002/03*	2006/07	2008/09	2010/11
% undergraduate population receiving DSA	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0

\*HESA Performance Indicators, Table T7, September 2004

**(iv) Ethnic Minority Students – Applications and Acceptances**

	2003 Intake*	2007 Intake	2010 Intake
Ethnic Minority applications as % total	12%	13%	14%
Ethnic Minority students accepted as % of those applying	19%	20%	21%

\* UCAS Data for Loughborough University

**8. Plans for Additional Outreach Work**

Our plans for additional activities will continue to focus on the groups identified in Section 6 above. We intend to expand the scale of a number of current initiatives and are already introducing some new ones in preparation for 2006 (\*highlighted below) drawing on recognised good practice.

Activity	2004/05	2006/07	2007/08	2010/11
University Experience Days	11	13	15	15
Shadowing Events	2	3	4	4
Taster Sessions	3	4	5	5
Mentoring (number of relationships)	110	150	200	200
*Students in Classrooms	2 schools, 10 students	5 schools, 25 students	10 schools, 50 students	10 schools, 50 students
*Students Helping Students Scheme, number trained and working with WP team	30	60	100	100
*Parents & Families Events	2	4	6	6
*Primary Schools as Partners	1	3	5	5
Focussed activities with FE Colleges	1	3	5	5
Access to HE through Sport (on campus activities)	3	6	10	10
Number of prospective students & parents involved	2,200	2,800	3,500	3,500
Number of schools/colleges Involved	45	53	60	60

Although many of the above activities will focus on local students, there will be a national dimension to this work, particularly relating to subject-specific issues. This is key for students who would not be able to access a particular subject area within their locality. Activities will either be accessible to, or specifically target, mature students, minority ethnic groups and students with disabilities as appropriate. We will encourage our own University students from these groups to participate in assisting with events as well as those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods. A significant proportion of our additional expenditure on outreach activities will be in the form of payments to students for their contribution, representing an additional source of income, predominately (we estimate at least 60%) for our students from under-represented groups. We develop new initiatives in partnership with other stakeholders and in response to national developments in good practice. All new activities will be carefully monitored and

adapted as necessary and there will also be scope for developing other activities not previously mentioned, for example, if a school requests a particular event.

### **Measurement of Impact**

A variety of approaches will be used to measure the impact of our outreach work, including the following:

- Evaluations will be conducted following each event. Recommendations and comments will be taken on board for future activities
- Establishing a series of events will allow direct follow-up with students and their teachers. The continued work will also allow pre- and post-event evaluations to be undertaken and some level of measurement of the impact on opinions and knowledge of further and higher education. The National AimHigher Initiative is also looking at the issue of measurement of impact and therefore we may need to implement national schemes of evaluation at a later date.
- Tracking of students will take place. Data on the students attending events will be collected (subject to data protection regulations) and their progress throughout the educational system will be monitored (with assistance from schools, colleges and Connexions)
- Monitoring of University student data will continue, focusing on admissions, progression and retention issues.

### **9. Monitoring Arrangements**

A report will be produced towards the end of each academic year setting out:

- Bursary numbers and expenditure for the year by academic department
- Progress against the milestones set out above relating to admissions and the composition of the student population
- A summary of outreach activities measured against the plans and milestones outlined above
- A summary of the results of evaluation of outreach activities, highlighting good practice and any proposed revisions for the future
- Any major concerns regarding performance against this agreement and how these will be addressed in the coming year

This report will be considered initially by the University's Student Recruitment & Admissions Team which is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching. Subject to comment by that group, it will be forwarded for formal consideration and approval by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee, Senate and Council prior to submission to OFFA.

This Agreement was originally approved by the Council of Loughborough University on 21 December 2004. Revisions relating to the PGCE were approved by the Council on 19 July 2005. Revision and updating of Sections 2 and 4 were approved by the Council on 19 December 2006.