

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

ACCESS AGREEMENT

Revised July 2008

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Introduction

Newman University College, Birmingham, is proud of its record in widening both access and participation. The College regularly outperforms its benchmarks for attracting students both from less advantaged backgrounds and from low participation neighbourhoods. Newman University College makes a major contribution to the provision of higher education opportunities for such communities both because of its geographical location in, and closeness to, some of the most deprived wards in England, and because of its well established connections with schools and colleges through its teacher training and professional development programmes. The Catholic mission of Newman University College also contributes to the institution's commitment to creating educational opportunities that enable human beings to reach their full potential. The College is fully engaged in AimHigher in Birmingham and Solihull.

Underlying Principles of the Newman University College Access Agreement

Newman will work to the following principles:

- a) Quality - the College strives to offer higher education of the best possible quality to all its students and uses additional income to enhance quality
- b) Attractiveness and accessibility - the College seeks to provide high quality infrastructure that enables all students, including those with disabilities, to access its programmes and courses easily
- c) Fairness - in making decisions about student support, the College will take appropriate account of a broad range of factors impacting on a student's economic circumstances
- d) Inclusion – the College's scheme is underpinned by a commitment to ensuring the widest possible range of students have access to higher education
- e) Sustainability – in deciding on the best use of any additional income, the College will prioritise the development of relevant and sustainable learning opportunities
- f) Continuing excellence in widening participation – given that the College currently attracts around 44% of its students from the Government's target groups, this principle sets out our commitment to maintaining that excellent outcome. The College has good retention and progression rates and will use some of its additional income and target bursary support to ensure that these improve further.

Duration of Access Agreement

Newman University College propose that this agreement runs for three years but will review its effectiveness annually. This version results from the third annual review.

Scope of agreement and intended fee levels

This agreement refers to full time undergraduate and PGCE students who pay fees of £3145 in 2008/09.

The Board of Governors of Newman University College has established that the College will set an upper fee limit of £3145 in 2008/09. The Board has also agreed that whilst the programmes on offer to students at the College are **worth** £3145, they will not **cost** most students £3145. This is because the College wishes to sustain its excellent record in attracting less well off students, principally through bursary support and exemplary student support.

Increases in fees will be applied where approved by the government. Fees will increase from £3145 in 2008/09 to £3225 in 2009/10.

Access measures

Given the current profile of Newman University College students, it has been decided to provide most full time students who study at Newman University College with a Newman Foundation Bursary (NFB). This is in the spirit of the College's mission and effectively limits the fee for every programme and course to a maximum of £2795 (2008/09) to eligible students. It ensures that the minimum level of bursary support is offered to all students on full state support. We expect that the majority of our students will be in receipt of some support.

In addition the College will use the model bursary scheme to assess residual income and will then apply additional student bursary support for target groups in accordance with the income bands detailed below. These bands and bursaries are subject to annual review. For 2009/10 the College will simplify the scheme and have one bursary based on household income.

2008/09 Academic Year (First Year students)

Up to £18,000	£310 NFB + Government support package + Band 1 Bursary
£18,001 to £25,000	£310 NFB + Partial Government support package + BAND 2 bursary
£25,001 to £40,000	£310 NFB + Band 3 bursary
£40,000 and over	£310 NFB

PGCE Students are eligible for the NFB only.

Bursary bands

Band 1	up to £790
Band 2	up to £490
Band 3	up to £190

2009/10 Academic Year (First Year students)

Up to £25,000	£525
£25,001 to £40,000	£400
£40,001 to 60,000	£350
£60,000 and over	£nil

PGCE Students are eligible for a maximum of £350 bursary support.

Assessment of eligibility

This will be in accordance with the model bursary scheme for minimum bursary requirements.

Payment of bursaries

These will be paid in 3 instalments during the year.

Provision of information to students

All prospective applicants to the Newman University College will be provided with information via the prospectus, the website and material available at Open Days, Family Evenings and College or school based AimHigher events. In addition, Newman will target under represented communities through mailshots, the use of school partnership networks, compact partnerships and AimHigher programmes. Customised material will be provided for target groups. This information will be provided throughout the year. The College will develop material to provide specific advice to students and will work in conjunction with its validating university to do this. Such material will include information on the following:

- Fee levels (by programme and mode)
- Bursary availability (by income level and programme)
- State support availability (by income level and programme)
- Accommodation costs
- Cost of living averages
- Details of SLC
- Details of LEA support lines
- Student support mechanisms
- Financial management advice
- Debt counselling and support

Outreach activity

Newman University College engages in a wide range of outreach activity. As a smaller HEI we currently work with a small College team plus the range of local AimHigher workers. We have invested substantially in staff with the appropriate expertise to support families with little experience of higher education in learning more about what higher education has to offer and how it can be planned for.

The College also provides regular family events in specific schools and wards including those with a high number of students who do not currently access higher education. This includes schools in Walsall, Dudley, South West Birmingham and North Worcestershire.

Newman is currently lead partner, for example, in an AimHigher programme which targets schools with fewer than 16% of students progressing into higher education and work will continue with this difficult to reach group. A key part of this work involves links with FE partners as well as schools since often students need to be encouraged to make the level 2/level 3 leap before they consider higher education.

Range of additional outreach activities

These include:

Master classes	10 per annum
Family information evenings	5 per annum
Sixth form conferences	3 per annum
School based talks	up to 20 per annum
Taster days	3 per department
Shadow a student days	As requested
Mentoring	A range of mentor programmes
Support for Children Looked After	25 per annum
Recruitment events for refugee families	2 per annum
Subject based Summer Schools	Annually

Compact arrangements

Newman University College has already developed a number of compact arrangements with between schools, Colleges and FE partners. These are usually tailor made for particular departments. The College is developing a more strategic approach to compact arrangements across the region.

Milestones

Newman is already exceeding benchmarks and currently attracts 47% of its students from lower income groups and 30% from low participation families. The University College seeks to maintain this position.

Monitoring of the Access Agreement

Newman University College will monitor this agreement through

- Analysis of applications, acceptances and registrations
- Evaluation of the scheme for bursary awards
- Analysis of retention data and of progression data
- HESA performance indicators
- Value for money analysis for Board of Governors

Monitoring is the responsibility of the Academic Board (student recruitment, progress and retention). It is also monitored by the Finance and General Purposes committee (for financial impact, costs incurred, infrastructure impact). An annual report goes to the Board of Governors on widening access and participation which includes a report on the impact and effectiveness of the Access Agreement. The Equal Opportunities Committee will monitor the impact of fees and bursaries on target groups.

The College will pay particular attention to the impact of the new fees regime on applications from the poorest groups and will work with partner schools and Colleges to ensure that student decision making pre application is

monitored for early identification of debt aversion or other issues which lead to a student rejecting the option of application to higher education.

Data on Diversity of Student Population 2007/8

Ethnicity

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Percentage of Newman population</i>
White	77%
Asian	10%
Black	6%
Mixed ethnicity	3%
Other ethnicity	4%
Total ethnic minority students	23%

Gender

<i>Gender Group</i>	<i>Percentage of Newman Population</i>
Male	22%
Female	78%

Age at start of academic year

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Percentage of Newman Population</i>
Less than 19	32%
19-21	24%
22-25	16%
26-35	14%
Greater than 35	14%

Social Class (Source: HESA Performance Indicators 2005/6)

Table 1a Young FT First Degree

	<i>Newman</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i>
Percentage from State Schools	99.3%	94.7%	96.0%
Percentage from NS Sec classes 4,5,6 and 7	44.3%	36.1%	38.5%
Percentage from Low Participation neighbourhoods	30.6%	18.4%	22.3%

Table 1b Young FT Undergraduate

	<i>Newman</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i>
Percentage from State Schools	99.3%	94.7%	96.0%
Percentage from NS Sec classes 4,5,6 and 7	44.3%	36.2%	38.9%
Percentage from Low Participation neighbourhoods	30.8%	18.5%	22.1%

Table 2a Mature FT First Degree

	<i>Newman</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i>
Percentage not previously in Higher Education and from low participation neighbourhoods	34.1%	23.2%	28.0%

Table 2b PT Undergraduate

	<i>Newman</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i>
Percentage not previously in Higher Education and from low participation neighbourhoods	Young 32.4%	24.0%	29.0%
	Mature 22.2%	12.8%	15.8%