



## ACCESS AGREEMENT 2015 – 2016

### INTRODUCTION

UCLan is extremely successful in delivering its strategy for widening access to higher education. This continues to be achieved through the implementation of a range of initiatives, developed over a period of years, which are now embedded in core business. Our 2015 to 2016 Access Agreement consolidates and builds on this success with further improvements, while at the same time investing substantial resources in measures to maximise all students' engagement, performance and attainment during their degree studies and beyond. We recognise that academic and support staff are the cornerstones of students' success and UCLan is making significant investment in the development of its people and undergraduate courses. Access to innovative interactive learning spaces and latest technologies will create an environment which enhances students' achievement and progression. All our staff will be equipped to draw on best practice in designing and delivering professional learning to raise levels of student attainment and employability. A key strand of our strategy for improving student progression and success is to clearly define responsibilities and measures, to ensure performance is closely monitored against the nominated targets, that there is appropriate challenge at all levels and the timely implementation of actions to meet or exceed targets. This will take place against a background of significant investment in student support.

### FEES, STUDENT NUMBERS, FEE INCOME AND FEE RISES IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS

UCLan will continue to charge a standard £9,000 pa for all its full time undergraduate courses, with the following exceptions:

The foundation entry years of the undergraduate courses will be charged at £3,900. This represents a reduction in the foundation entry year fee from the current fees of £6,000 and is part of the strategy to heavily subsidise foundation entry to widen access for students with non-standard qualifications.

Students on courses delivered by UCLan staff at the Burnley campus will be charged a discounted fee of £7,000 for honours degrees and £6,000 for foundation degrees, as a reflection of the local target market.

Students undertaking a sandwich year in 2015-16 will be charged £680.

Partners with indirectly funded provision will charge £6,000 for foundation entry and foundation degrees, except in the case of specialist foundation degree provision at Myerscough College, which will be charged at £8,000.

Honours Degrees in partner institutions will be charged at £9,000; Runshaw and Burnley Colleges, which offer Year 1 and Year 2 of our honours degrees, will discount these to £6,000. Hugh Baird College offers a top-up (Year 3) to our honours degree, discounted to £6,000.

Part-time courses are studied via a mixture of routes from distance learning to block release. Fees will be set at a module rate of £600 (with 6 modules being equivalent to 1FTE). Partners have a range of fees based on the varying markets for their part time courses, ranging from £600 to £1000 per module (the highest confirmed fee to date is £750 per module).

	<b>UCLan Preston</b>	<b>UCLan Burnley</b>	<b>Myerscough College (indirectly funded)</b>	<b>Other partners (indirectly funded)</b>
Full-time undergraduate foundation entry years	3,900	3,900	N/A	6,000
Full-time undergraduate foundation degrees	9,000	6,000	8,000	6,000
Full-time undergraduate honours degrees	9,000	7,000*	9,000	6,000* - 9,000
Sandwich years	680	680	680	N/A
Part-time (per fte)	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600 – 4500
PG courses for the initial training of teachers that are subject to regulated fees	N/A	N/A	6,000	6,000

\*Discounted from £9,000

We will apply any permitted real terms rise in fees from 2016-17 onwards.

## **EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND RETENTION MEASURES**

Indicative expenditure is shown below highlighting the balance of access and student success activities, whilst at the same time enhancing bursary support to recognise the fact that a significant number of UCLan students enter from low income families. Feedback from students and from the Students' Union is that such measures encourage low income families into higher education and improve progression rates.

Access	£485,550
Student Success	£2,836,191
Progression	£812,500
Financial support	£4,748,079
Monitoring and evaluation	£40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£8,922,320</b>

All of the expenditure noted is "countable" for the purposes of this Access Agreement.

## **FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS**

Financial support will be provided to students in cash and through payments to support learning.

Additional funds will be allocated to enhance the hardship fund to be administered by the Harris Bursary Fund Panel. Through these additional funds we will be able to provide more targeted financial support to mature students, especially student parents and to students in need at appropriate points throughout the student lifecycle.

Our approach to financial support is evolving based on discussions with the Students' Union and on feedback from previous and current First Years as well as national research and feedback. The Students' Union favours an approach which continues to provide a high level of support to the very poorest students, but allows for differing levels of support for other students presenting varying needs. Feedback from previous and current First Year students suggests that although the availability of financial support is not a key determinant in the decision to come to University, once here it is highly valued and may make a significant difference in some students' ability to stay the course, thus impacting favourably on student success and progression. While recognising that national research does not point to bursaries having significant impact in widening participation, we feel that tailored investment, based on impartial and auditable criteria, will allow interventions by way of financial support to be used to maximise student retention and achievement.

## **ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE**

Traditionally UCLan has an extremely strong track record of access for under-represented groups. HESA Performance Indicators are used as the main measure and the most recent release (for 2012/13 data) reflects that we met or exceeded our targets, with 19.1% of young full-time first degree students coming from low participation neighbourhoods (target 15% - POLAR 2 methodology) and 43% of young full-time first degree students being drawn from lower socio economic groups (target 39%).

We have a strong story to tell and the data represents an improvement on the previous year's data, but we are mindful that there could be threats to our continued success in this area. We have therefore made a strategic decision to introduce a foundation entry year option for all our undergraduate courses offered on campus. These are heavily discounted to allow for access to higher education by students with non-traditional qualifications within which students from low participation neighbourhoods form a high proportion. We have made a strategic decision to continue with our policy of maintaining the increased entry requirements for full time undergraduate courses. However, we have introduced the significantly expanded alternative entry route to ensure that this policy will not have a negative impact on students with 'non-standard' qualifications who have the potential to benefit from higher education. We currently monitor this using the HESA performance indicators noted above, but if this data begins to indicate a downturn in enrolments of students from these under-represented groups, we will look to extend our monitoring to cover applications.

Retention is an area of challenge for us, but we are on track with our plans to address this and the latest HESA Performance Indicator release projected that 77.4% of our students would obtain a degree, against a milestone of 69%. Over recent years we have been working to understand the nature and extent of any differential impacts on under-represented groups and have developed a series of internal data reports to examine this at both school and university levels. We are now developing a series of initiatives to ensure that students from all backgrounds are effectively

supported to be able to complete their programme of study with us. This will be rigorously monitored through the College structure and investment in enhanced data collection and reporting systems.

We are not only concerned to ensure that our students complete their courses; we want to see them achieve strong grades that ensure that they are competitive in the graduate job market. We have, therefore, been working to identify and understand any differentials in the achievement of students from under-represented groups. We have chosen to focus initially on the attainment gap between White students and BME students. Our analysis shows that this attainment gap is present at UCLan, and although the gap here is below the sector average (UCLan 16.3%, sector average 18.4%), we are determined to reduce this significantly over the next few years. We have therefore agreed a new set of targets and milestones to address this and the University Board has confirmed our intention to reduce this gap to 12% (or lower) by 2017. In addressing this gap, we are also developing a series of broader initiatives aimed at ensuring that students from all backgrounds are effectively supported to achieve their full potential.

## **ACCESS MEASURES**

UCLan's Strategy for the period 2007-2017 reaffirms our commitment to "continue to lead the UK higher education sector in promoting equality of educational opportunity".

The three objectives arising from this are:

1. To maintain a diverse student profile (particularly in relation to socio-economic origin, ethnicity, age and disability) and to achieve retention, progression and achievement levels, and post-degree destinations, for students from diverse backgrounds which are on a par with those of the university population as a whole
2. To develop the University's partnership network with colleges, schools and employers with a focus on strengthening progression routes from foundation and other pre-undergraduate degree courses and years and by extending educational opportunity to students from a diversity of backgrounds and professions
3. To develop a curriculum which focuses on student engagement and is flexibly structured and delivered to meet the diverse needs of our students and of employers so that students can combine their studies with their other life commitments and with qualifications delivered wholly or partly in the workplace.

## **Collaborative provision**

Widening participation is the major driver behind our extensive collaborative arrangements with FE colleges and other partner organisations, and behind the development of the Burnley University Campus. Evidence from 2012/13 data indicates that our partnership arrangements make a significant contribution to mature student entry, with 58% of students based at Burnley and 66% of the students at other partners being over 21 compared with 54% of students at the main campus. 48% of students at Burnley come from low social classes, compared with 42% in other partners and

40% at the main campus. 30% of students on UCLan direct-delivery programmes at Burnley are BME compared with 15% at the main campus.

Although our relationship with FE college partners is changing in the light of government policy (indirectly funded student numbers have reduced by 46% as partners have been successful in gaining directly funded numbers from the newly created “margin”) we remain committed to working collaboratively to extend educational opportunity within the region, and to support highly successful subject-based networks in areas such as post-compulsory teacher education, sport and nuclear engineering. Our key college partners have maintained and in some cases grown their HE provision through successful bids for student numbers from the “margin” and UCLan continues to be the validating partner for courses which are now directly funded.

UCLan sponsors two Helena Kennedy Scholarships a year, which are awarded to disadvantaged students progressing from FE colleges.

### **Junior University**

UCLan remains committed to working closely with schools and colleges in Pennine Lancashire and Preston to further develop and deliver our Junior University (JU). During the pilot 2010-11 year, three cohorts of Year 9 and 10 pupils participated in the JU, with a 93% completion rate over the 20-session programme (51 out of 55). Qualitative feedback from participants, teachers and parents was uniformly positive. Participant questionnaires demonstrated significant improvements in motivation, knowledge and understanding of HE. Teachers highlighted the positive impact on confidence, maturity and motivation. Parents talked about the excellent opportunity, inspirational student ambassadors and positive benefits for their children.

In 2011-12 JU was expanded in Burnley with 119 enrolments against a target 100, drawn from six 11-16 schools and one FE college. A pilot JU commenced at the Preston campus in May 2012 again with the number of enrolments exceeding target. Overall for Burnley and Preston there were 161 participants who completed the activity in 2011-12 against a target of 150. Participants received questionnaires to complete at pre, mid and at the final close of the programme. 99% of all participants felt inspired to continue studying after their GCSE's. 71% of teachers who completed evaluation forms definitely agreed or agreed that the JU programme enhances the curriculum. In terms of impact within the school environment, 86% of teachers definitely agreed or agreed that the performance of the participants in class and engagement in school had improved since the start of the JU programme.

Based on feedback following the evaluation process the main programme was offered to Year 10 pupils only in 2012-13.

Junior University 2013 commenced in February, with both the Preston and Burnley programme roll out commencing within the same week. Enrolments were 239 against a target of 250. A slightly reduced head count was planned to enable participation of the first year pilot students, now in Year 12, in the end of programme residential activity. This is to enable further longitudinal research and evaluation of JU to take place. This year's programme has been revised to include additional stretch and challenge throughout with particular emphasis on additional academic activity and to include follow up activities with years 11 and 12 students.

## **Other HE-FE-Secondary School collaboration**

Working in collaboration with Preston Collaborative Partnership (PCP – formally the Preston 14-19 LEAD Group), a pilot programme was launched in 2011-12 to support learners who may be at risk of becoming “not in education, employment or training” (NEET). Pupils (10) were identified from Longridge High school in Preston to work with student mentors from Preston College (BTEC vocational students) and UCLan, on a pilot project which was designed to raise their participation, confidence and motivation in education. Based on evaluation feedback, there was a 10% increase in those who were confident that they could achieve a university qualification at the end of the programme compared to the beginning. In preparation for RPA (Raising the Participation Age) and the potential impact that this may have on the NEET agenda, UCLan extended this programme for 2013 working with four Preston Schools and extending the activity to 20 “at risk pupils”. By sharing expertise and resource working in collaboration with Preston Collaborative Partnership this model will serve as a test bed for further development within the immediate locality of the University working with schools in some of the most deprived wards. For 2013-14 the project has been extended to include pre-NEET (year 9) students.

In addition to this academic Schools in UCLan work in a variety of ways with pupils from feeder schools in the region and in particular with pupils from low participation neighbourhoods to run university taster events, subject specific events, joint projects and other outreach activities. Such relationships are ongoing through the year and through such links pupils come into university and academics go out into schools to raise aspirations. In Cumbria UCLan is working with two partners, Howgill Family Centre and Inspira Inspiration for Life, on two three-year projects with young people and families from low participation areas to identify and evaluate interventions which encourage resilience, success and progression into higher education and throughout the student lifecycle.

In July 2014 UCLan is hosting a year 8 EXPO event for pupils from schools in the area and this is expected to bring over 6,000 pupils onto campus to engage with a wide variety of hands-on activities with staff and students to raise aspirations, highlight careers opportunities, expand networks and inspire pupils to work towards reaching their full potential through routes into higher education.

UCLan is also a strategic partner with Visions Learning Trust, which opened a University Technical College in Burnley in 2013; and is the HE partner for the UTC in Wigan, which again opened in 2013. The University also sponsors the West Lakes Academy in West Cumbria and is a partner in the Montgomery Trust in Blackpool and in Wigan Education Trust. UCLan is working with Visions Learning Trust to sponsor Preston Guild UTC in Preston city centre to extend opportunities for gaining skills which will allow progression into HE and careers in construction and engineering. A particular theme of the UTC is to improve gender balance within the industries served and access by students from low participation areas. This work is part of an emerging strategy to work in depth with selected partners to tackle issues around achievement and aspiration, and to remove barriers to students from disadvantaged areas having the opportunity to participate in the most challenging areas of study.

Whilst it is recognised that relatively low numbers of care leavers currently access Higher Education, this is an area of focus for UCLan for 2015-16 as part of the strategic commitment to increasing their participation. UCLan has developed a programme to implement interventions targeted at supporting these groups. Although the Buttle accreditation in itself has been discontinued, UCLan is

using research commissioned by the Buttle Trust to inform its strategy and interventions by adopting the recommendations to improve the chances of care leavers accessing and remaining in Higher Education. Building on the outreach work we are already delivering additional emphasis is also being placed on ensuring that Looked After Children are offered the same opportunities to participate, for example, in the Junior University programme, and to be supported by Peer mentors and Student Ambassador mentors.

### **Collaboration with HEIs**

The four universities covering Cumbria and Lancashire (University of Cumbria, University of Central Lancashire, Edge Hill University and Lancaster University) continue to liaise post-Aimhigher in order to share ideas and best practice for outreach activity, to minimise the risk of duplication, and to make the most effective use of the resource available across the four institutions. Although there are practical limitations in the ability to share resources and facilities where institutions are not closely co-located, throughout 2012 and 2013, there has been some level of collaborative working, mainly in relation to re-directing requests for activity from 11-16 schools to Universities more closely located to their geographical locations with regard to primary activity.

### **Public and community engagement**

An extensive and varied set of public and community engagement activities contributes directly to the widening participation agenda by engaging young people, parents, teachers and advisers. The Lancashire Science Festival, held for the first time in June 2012, and now organised as an annual event, showcases the diversity of opportunities available at HE and beyond in an accessible and engaging manner to 8000+ visitors. Visitor feedback from this event has been extremely positive and highlighted that this was an initial point of contact with UCLan that many underrepresented groups would not otherwise have had. Students contribute to the Lancashire Science Festival through provision of hands-on activities, as voluntary festival assistants and as student ambassadors. Funding is made available for schools in low socio economic areas to cover transport costs to the Lancashire Science Festival. The Lancashire Science Festival remains our flagship community event and will take place again in June 2014 as a major three-day celebration.

UCLan is also engaged in the Preston City Council sponsored 'Winckley Weekend' in May 2014, which will attract 6,000+ visitors to the City from diverse backgrounds. Supported by student ambassadors UCLan will put on hands-on activities and raise awareness of university education through a series of stalls and events over the two days.

Outreach projects, especially in STEM, are often targeted at those schools that cannot participate in expensive curriculum enrichment and are always provided free of charge. We work closely with the Ogden Trust to raise the aspirations of young people and increase progression into STEM subject areas, especially Maths and Physics, through Science Partnerships and access to Ogden studentships. The outreach projects also raise awareness of the UTCs which provide pupils with opportunities to focus on these subject areas alongside gaining workplace experience and developing applied projects to engage their interest.

Public and community engagement is part of the research culture at UCLan. Ten research staff have been appointed as 'engagement catalysts' and an artist in residence bridges the gap between the

research environment and the regional community, through creative outputs. Many Catalyst projects directly address issues of aspiration and participation, from working with girls in computing to offering a Pro Bono law clinic extending legal advice to socioeconomic deprived groups. This is supported by the Creative Communities Network of alumni, UCLan honorary fellows, business leaders, staff and students who put on a range of activities during the year designed to engage pupils who have otherwise limited exposure to higher education as well as creating a forum for raising existing students aspirations, awareness and opportunities for progression into chosen careers.

Students make a core contribution to many of our current outreach activities and are encouraged to contribute to public and community engagement events in a variety of ways. Research students and staff can access relevant training in skills for public and community engagement, and the EngageUCLan steering group is working to reward and recognise these activities. The SU also provides recognition for student volunteering and works in partnership with the university to maximise student involvement and recognition.

The Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership (CVCL) has an extensive network of partners regionally, nationally and internationally, including Russia, Oman, Pakistan and the USA, who support the development of the academic, training and Continuous Professional Development programmes delivered by the Centre through volunteer placements and expert contributions. A project is underway to build on the extensive work undertaken in CVCL by creating a social enterprise volunteering centre, due to open in 2014-15. This will enable CVCL to sustain an even broader range of activities and volunteering opportunities involving a higher proportion of the student population.

Students from any course across the University can get involved in the Centre alongside community, charity and corporate organisations. CVCL has worked with the Russian youth and volunteering organisation, Association of Young Leaders since 2002. The centre supported Sochi's 2014 Winter Olympics Committee in Russia to develop the Olympic volunteering opportunities. Work is also ongoing to support participation in volunteering at the Summer 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The Centre's International Institute for Community Leadership (IICL) based at the UCLan Burnley campus is led by collaboration with community organisations. The Institute is set to be influenced by the needs within communities and aims to respond, support and listen to what's needed by activists, organisers and groups at the grassroots. CVCL is noted for its work in developing community cohesion and active citizenship projects, winning the CRAC Higher Education Active Community Fund Exceptional Student Volunteer of the Year 2004 and the HEVA awards 2008.

**Institute for Leadership and Management:** The Centre for Volunteering and Community Leadership is an Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) accredited centre on behalf of the University of Central Lancashire. As well as ILM accreditation through academic programmes of study the centre has accredited much of its volunteering activity. This is aimed at supporting our students to become effective leaders within the community and providing grassroots organisations with the opportunity to 'grow your own' community leaders for the future.

**Digital and Literacy Exclusion Project** designed and led by UCLan graduate interns employed by the University involved the design of IT training packages to assist sections of the public gain the skills to access IT networks and the digital environment. Working with charities as partners to pilot the



packages, the interns were able to enhance the skills and inspire engagement with learning amongst sections of the public currently excluded through their literacy and digital skills. The project work will now be rolled out using student volunteers on a broader scale to improve adult literacy and digital engagement.

**Lancashire Youth Voices Project** led by UCLan staff and students from the Community Leadership BA course is aimed at engaging three different groups of young people from Preston and Pennine Lancashire. The project explored young people's views of community cohesion, equality and diversity, active citizenship through creative expression, educational and interactive workshops exploring the concept of community cohesion and how it relates to the young people involved and their local area. These workshops culminated in the production of a creative and relevant story which is presented as a stop frame animation. The story incorporated the views of young people in Lancashire and raised awareness of how a more cohesive community can be created. Seal Films, a Lancashire based film company have put the finished piece together and this is now being exhibited and will be used as an educational tool.

**Travellers through Time:** A joint project between UCLan and a Preston based Travellers Site aimed to improve the literacy skills of their young people alongside providing an opportunity for students at UCLan to learn more about the Traveller culture as well as the young people to learn more about non Travellers. A group of six students have been attending the site once a week for the past six months with a community artist. In order to improve on the literacy skills, the artist and UCLan students worked with the young people to write and record stories using creative monologues based on Traveller history.

**West Lakes projects:** Throughout the past year CVCL, the University's Applied Policy Science Unit with the Samuel Lindow Foundation has been working in Whitehaven and surrounding areas to address cultural, educational and social issues and inequalities, and has looked at the role of poverty as a factor influencing this. Working with multi partners agencies and schools in the region a number of conferences and events have been held along with interviews with parents, teachers and pupils to gain qualitative data on improving social equality and raising aspirations. A number of summer schools, aimed at working with community organisations and community leaders, were held in July 2013 and further events are planned for 2014; these programmes of study were delivered as university certificates aiming to up-skill members of the local community.

**Flying start** is now a mature programme designed to help students without family experience of higher education and from low participation backgrounds into higher education through a tailored pre-entry programme of events offered across a block in summer. Tracking students forward, this programme has been demonstrated to increase student access and also to sustain engagement to improve progression and success through the student lifecycle.

**Social media and call centre activities** are designed to engage students with UCLan prior to their entry and provide a forum for prospective students to discuss concerns and ask questions with existing students and their peers in an informal and supportive environment. Supported by student mentors and peer to peer mentors these activities include welcome contacts and follow up to ensure that students' journey into higher education is as smooth as possible. These help provide re-assurance and advice to students from low participation areas or with low levels of family

experience in higher education. The social media activities are also targeted at subject groups, so that students can start to create learning networks and communities of practice prior to entry to the course, which have been demonstrated to be very effective in helping students progress and maximise achievement while at university and in achievement of their career goals.

## **Summary**

In summary UCLan is committed to:

- Expanding access from under-represented groups to all its courses by offering a comprehensive set of discounted foundation year entry programmes as an alternative to traditional entry qualifications
- Continuing to work with and through FE College partners to strengthen the participation of under-represented groups through:
  - a 2+2+1 progression model, based on progression through vocational FE to Foundation Degree (or similar) and on, where appropriate, to top-up Honours Degree or Level 5/6 CPD programmes;
  - employer/employee-friendly CPD programmes at levels 4-6 targeting mature and part time students in particular
- Extending the Junior University approach alongside other outreach activities as an umbrella for a portfolio of activities to target cohorts of students, primarily at Key Stage 4, from under-represented groups
- Extending its work with UTCs and Academies and employers to extend access to higher education from under-represented groups in areas of skills shortages such as construction and engineering
- Targeting UCLan Schools/courses where disadvantaged groups are poorly represented for specific outreach activity as part of the Junior University approach and/or with students drawn from a wider geographical area
- Working in collaboration with a range of partners to reach out to communities in deprived areas of our region.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS**

UCLan's student support mechanisms are wide ranging and impressive and, given the profile of our student body, we commit considerable resources to initiatives designed to smooth the transition of our students into HE; support them and maximise engagement during their critical first year of study; develop strong communities of learning and cohort identity to strengthen academic performance from under-represented groups; re-engage those students who have withdrawn or who are at risk of withdrawing; and provide specialist support for students with specific needs associated with, for example, disability or family hardship. Increasingly, however, we are also placing much more emphasis on working proactively with students to encourage and help them to

make the most of the opportunities available to them, both as part of and in addition to their academic programmes and to build networks to support their future success. We believe that this is essential if we are to address the challenges to “social mobility” likely to be experienced by many of our students, and in particular those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We have been encouraged by early signs of improvement in student retention and progression, but this, together with the overall success of our students, remains a key institutional priority. As reported in our 2014-15 Access Agreement one of the ways we are addressing the challenges is to bring a number of disparate initiatives together in a more integrated approach to the management of the “student journey”, focussing on interventions through the full student lifecycle and on student engagement and the development of leadership skills. A series of focussed student engagement activities and high energy ‘student engagement weeks’ are being delivered and further ones are planned across the University to ensure that all students are engaged with their learning journey throughout their time at UCLan and with all the opportunities that are available to them grow and develop. These activities specifically relate to the more vulnerable periods for student engagement (for example after vacations, before or after assessment periods) and to students who are returning to education in terms of identifying opportunities for buddying, volunteering and additional study opportunities (such as languages). Additionally two new ‘Future Leaders Programmes’ have been developed. In their first year of operation 60% of students attending were from low participation or under-represented groups. The programmes have drawn on leaders from industry and the professions, the armed forces and UCLan’s own expertise in leadership. Feedback from the programmes has been extremely positive, with students reporting increased confidence, engagement and career development awareness. To further support the learning development of students linked to the delivery of structured work experience, opportunities for placements, internships and other forms of work experience and volunteering are embedded in all courses. Peer mentoring and the leadership and management of personal development (to which all students are invited and supported to take part) is offered alongside tailored one to one careers’ advice and guidance. The Careers Service offers a series of dedicated subject based careers events supported by employers and cross-university events which are designed to engage all students with careers support.

UCLan has made explicit the broad opportunities available to students through the packaging and promotion of “the UCLan Advantage”. Key elements of this are the structured work experience opportunities, overseas study, portable financial credit, sports facilities membership and the provision of “personal advice” to help students navigate through and make the most of the opportunities available. A comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the “Advantage” is underway and ongoing. Aspects of the Advantage which have been demonstrated to be effective are being strengthened. Through this we will be able to monitor the progress of students from different diversity and socio-economic groups through and beyond UCLan and assess the effectiveness of the package in addressing the gap between attainment and post-graduate destinations of different groups of students.

It is clear from the feedback that employability built into the curriculum, the guarantee of structured work experience, and the availability of portable financial credit are the most highly valued parts of the offer. It is also clear that the proactive role of Peer mentors and Personal Tutors in contacting students before arrival and providing support during the first half of the year has proved an

important part of the settling in process and for some students made the difference between early withdrawal and continuation. The aim is to identify and support students to engage with their academic studies and wider extra-curricular activities to maximise value added by their university experience.

Further support for students is being rolled out through the use of Pebblepad, an e-portfolio interactive software package for use by students to record and reflect on their skills and academic development and careers' advice, supported by academic tutors, personal tutors and the careers service and employability staff. Online literacy and numeracy software packages are being piloted to assess students' performance and areas for intervention. The packages produce tailored interventions for students to engage with to support performance in conjunction with work of academic and personal tutors. Strengthening of face to face skills support is offered by 'Wiser' our targeted study skills intervention team. Alongside this a comprehensive and best practice informed programme of academic staff development is being rolled out from 2014 to further assist and inspire staff to create curricula and identify and support students to maximise their potential and future success regardless of levels of prior attainment.

Further support for the employability agenda has been provided through the creation of additional posts in our Careers' Service and in our Innovation and Enterprise service, to give advice and act as the interface between employers and our academic Schools and, amongst other things, to generate structured work experience opportunities for our undergraduates. This service also has an important role to play in seeking to arrest the decline in part time participation, through the development of more customer-friendly options for employers and employees. There is a renewed focus on providing tailored one to one careers' advice and support to students.

Recognising the importance of work experience in the student lifecycle, as a pilot all 2013 graduates who were not in work after graduation have been offered paid graduate level work experience or a free place on a post graduate Certificate in Project Management, alongside employability and enterprise workshops, to boost their careers prospects. This has been done in conjunction with university services, regional employers and specialist agencies. While the project is still being evaluated initial feedback is extremely positive and qualitative data collected suggests many participants in the scheme have been positively supported through the programme into permanent full time graduate employment. For 2014 and beyond we are working to enhance and expand the programme to extend opportunities to students prior to graduation. From 2014 it is intended that all undergraduate degree programmes will offer a placement year option to increase work experience.

Our experience of administering the Harris Bursary Fund is that quite small amounts of support – provided in the form of, for example, food vouchers, book tokens and essential IT equipment – can make a substantial difference to students when given the opportunity to apply for support at different times of the year. We have used the Funds available to target support to mature students, those with family responsibilities, and students in hardship who are living at home but struggling to meet the costs of travel. Through the enhancement of the funds available we also want to direct support to students who would find it difficult on financial grounds to access work experience and global experience opportunities.

## Summary

In summary the University remains committed to continually improving the performance, progression and completion of students on all our programmes, and is allocating additional resource to:

- Continuing to develop the curriculum and delivery modes to make our programmes accessible to a diverse student population, including those in employment, returning to study and/or unable to attend on a full time basis
- Providing more integrated and proactive leadership and management of the student journey through a focus on active student engagement throughout each academic year, leadership development activity and tailored one to one career and employment advice
- To provide work experience opportunities for all students throughout the student lifecycle including post-graduation internships and careers support.
- Providing financial support at the point of need to students in addition to the standard package of support for students from low household incomes.
- To roll out a sustainable programme of staff development to embed best practice within the curricula and pedagogies adopted

## TARGETS AND MILESTONES

We aim to:

- Remain at or above benchmark for the recruitment of full time students from state schools, low social classes and low participation neighbourhoods
- Achieve year-on-year increases in the percentage of students expected to complete their degree and to achieve good honours degrees
- Achieve year-on-year increases in the percentage of students expected to be in graduate level employment within six months of graduation

In recognition of the fact that we will need to work harder in the future to attract students from under-represented groups, we anticipate that our strategy to expand foundation entry years to all our degrees will ensure the overall proportion of such students amongst our student body is maintained, and remains at least at benchmark.

We are seeking annual increases of 2% rising to 4% over the next 5 years in terms of retention.

We are seeking annual increases of 3% over the next 5 years in terms of graduate employability.

In supporting these aims we will:

- Engage younger age groups from year 6 upwards in activities to raise aspirations and promote progress into higher education through activities such as the Year 8 EXPO and Science Festivals on campus
- Engage Year 10 upwards students from the targeted cohorts in a co-ordinated programme of interventions leading to HE

- Work in collaboration with FE and other partners to strengthen the progression of vocational learners, including apprentices, and part time learners into HE
- Support the recruitment of students to our sponsored Academy and UTCs in Westlakes, Wigan and Burnley, and seek to expand to include a new UTC to be based in Preston
- Support our students with employability embedded within the curriculum and through extra curricula activities and structured work experience.

We aim to increase and sustain participation in the Junior University to approximately 300 participants a year from the 2010-11 baseline of 50; and would further aim to carry out targeted work with a minimum of 300 vocational learners in partner institutions in 2015-16; and promote opportunities and aspirations to go into higher education with 6000 younger participants through the Schools' EXPO on campus in 2015-16 and annually.

Having identified that, like the rest of the higher education sector, a smaller proportion of our BME students achieve a first or upper second class degree than our White students, we have set ourselves a new set of targets and milestones which aim to reduce this gap in attainment to well below the sector average by 2017.

We are pleased to note that, as reported above, our performance against the milestones we set for this year has been strong, with all targets being met or exceeded.

Recognising that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are under-represented in rates of graduates employed in graduate occupations within 6 months of graduation, we have set ourselves a target to increase the percentage of graduates employed by 10% by 2017. Indications are that performance against this criterion is improving significantly.

We are currently working to deliver our medium term strategy, which has established a number of key outcomes that we want to achieve by 2017. The 2017/18 academic year will, therefore, be a year of consolidation and review as we evaluate our achievements and identify our next set of challenges. With this in mind, the targets we have set for 2017/18 are identical to those for 2016/17.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS**

The Access Agreement is monitored through reports to the Student Experience Committee which is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Peter Dunleavy. The Students' Union is represented on this Committee. Overall responsibility for the Access Agreement resides with Lynne Livesey, Pro Vice-Chancellor, who is a member of Student Experience Committee.

Operational management and delivery of outreach activity is delegated to the Director of Marketing (Joel Arber) and responsibility for meeting course-level retention targets lies with the Deans, reporting in to their Directorate lead.

Monitoring of the targets and milestones identified within the Access Agreement is addressed on an on-going basis through the use of the University's scorecard system, which is updated monthly and presents key performance data to the University Board, Academic Board and its sub-committees, the Senior Management Team, Schools and Services.

In addition to collecting feedback on the impact of individual outreach activities and student success activities, we have commissioned longitudinal research into the experience and progression of Junior University participants into and through HE. We annually monitor the progression of students from HE courses offered through partner organisations to “top-up” courses at UCLan and progression of students from the foundation year programmes. We have also put in place a comprehensive evaluation plan for those aspects of the student experience which we package as the “UCLan Advantage” which includes financial support, personal advice and support, and employability support.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

UCLan is strongly committed to its equality and diversity responsibilities across the full range of its activities as a provider of higher education. Throughout the student lifecycle we actively promote equality and diversity by providing diverse entry routes to our degree courses and a suite of interventions and support tailored to ensure students achieve their full potential regardless of prior attainment. Our access agreement is closely linked to our equality and diversity work. For example we are expanding the suite of foundation entry year courses to provide non-standard access to all our undergraduate degrees. This is offered at a substantially discounted fee. The study skills and learning to support the transition to higher education embedded within the curriculum is designed to further strengthen, and ensure, student success. Our access agreement and equality and diversity focus are both intended to fulfil our key commitment of enabling access and providing equality of opportunity to all those who are able to benefit from higher education.

In response to the flexibility of the Equality Act 2010 we have included targets within the University’s key strategic document (the Corporate Plan). We believe this is a significant strength and an indication of our commitment to ensuring that equality and diversity issues are at the centre of the University’s core priorities. This approach is also a key lever to ensure that equality and diversity activities are mainstreamed effectively across the University. We are otherwise meeting the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 by publishing a breadth of student and staff equality and diversity information at: [www.uclan.ac.uk/equalityact2010](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/equalityact2010)

Our vision is strongly focused on achieving equality of outcomes too. Our strategic equality and diversity objectives, therefore, are:

- Monitoring the staff and student diversity profiles.
- Ensuring that student applications, enrolments, retention, satisfaction, attainment and employability outcomes for students from diverse groups are on a par with or outperform the wider student body.
- Ensuring that staff applications, appointments, satisfaction, retention, progression and training for staff from diverse groups are on a par with or outperform the wider staff body.
- Ensuring that we inspire inclusive learning communities and develop curricula which are accessible, challenging, engaging and meet the needs of diverse groups of students, in terms of design, delivery, content, mode of learning, assessment and achievement.

- Ensuring that our approach to developing and implementing interventions is evidence-based, research informed, monitored and evaluated.
- Ensuring that all our staff are equipped with skills, training and development programmes to ensure they have the confidence, knowledge and skills to deal with diversity issues on a daily basis.
- We celebrate, through multi layered activities and rewards, our diversity and discuss and debate key institutional and sector diversity issues.

In support of this, we recognise that it is important to set targets in some areas so progress can be achieved more quickly and be monitored tangibly. We undertake regular effective monitoring, build up effective bases, produce meaningful student equality and diversity information across the range of student lifecycle stages and make this available to staff to interrogate and inform their approaches. E&D Leads in Academic areas monitor performance, benchmark it and identify areas of under-representation or disparities in satisfaction, retention or attainment locally between groups of students due to protected characteristics and socio-economic background. Reports feed into Committee structures and periodic course reviews evaluate trends and discuss actions planned.

As noted above, institutionally we have identified that we have an ethnicity attainment gap between our UK-domiciled White and BME students, which we are committed to reducing by 2017. A University-wide working group will enable us to take this work forward. By engaging closely with the sector and other HEIs we keep abreast of latest research and findings and share best practice with other HEIs in steps taken to address attainment differences.

We will closely monitor and evaluate activities to consider the impact on protected equality groups. We will be setting further equality and diversity targets as our work develops.

## **PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS**

UCLan provides information on fees and financial support on its “Study\_here @” and “fees\_and\_finance\_@” and “bursaries\_scholarship@” pages on the website; through talks and publications at Open and Applicant Days; through pre-entry information sent to applicants; through public engagement events; leaflets and guidance information in public places; and through staff advising students at recruitment fairs and open days or working with under-represented groups through a wide range of outreach activities.

## **CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS**

Student views are highly valued within UCLan and are sought on a wide range of matters, through a range of mechanisms from representation on all senior committees, including Academic Board and University Board, feedback at course and School level, and meetings between the SU and the Senior Management Team. In compiling this Access Agreement the University has, as with all previous Agreements, consulted with the Students’ Union (SU). The SU, through its Officers’ direct involvement in discussions with the group developing the Access Agreement, has fed in views about the student support package. The student view, in particular, that they would wish to see greater



use of cash and hardship monies rather than portable financial credits, has led to financial support from 14/15 being in full as cash rather than credits. Feedback from the SU will be sought as part of the evaluation of this financial support and they will be consulted on any future developments or changes.

The SU continues to be concerned that mature students are fully supported and as members of the Panel which disburses Harris Bursaries has ensured that they are prioritised in allocating funds. The SU itself, recognising the importance of the University's partnership arrangements as a means of promoting access to HE for mature students, has strengthened its links with key local colleges. The SU is keen to continue the financial support to students previously provided through the Access to Learning Fund and the University will ensure that this support is made available from its Student Opportunity funding

The SU is very keen to ensure that all possible support is given to students in the provision of career enhancing activities such as work placements, internships, subject relevant work experience and that funds are available to make these activities accessible by students from lower socio-economic backgrounds as well as the wider student community. The SU's view is that they would wish to work in partnership with the University to seek and provide such opportunities and that financial support is made available. The relationship of all forms of funded work experience in promoting student success and progression, through the student lifecycle, into graduate careers will be evaluated.

**Access agreement 2015-16 resource plan (submission 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014)**  
**(Table 7) Targets and milestones**

**Institution name: University of Central Lancashire**

**Institution UKPRN: 10007141**

**Table 7a** - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	HESA T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To remain at or above benchmark for the recruitment of full time students from low social classes	No	2011 (2009/10 data)	39%	minimum 39%	minimum 39%	minimum 39%			
2	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	To remain at or above benchmark for the recruitment of full time students from low participation neighbourhoods	No	2011 (2009/10 data)	16.3%	minimum 15.5%	minimum 16%	minimum 16%			
3	HESA T5 - Projected degree (full-time, first degree entrants)	To achieve year on year increases in the percentage of students expected to complete their degree	No	2010 (2008/09 data)	68.7%	72%	76%	80%			
4	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	To reduce the attainment gap between BME and White students	No	2010/11 qualifiers	16.3%	max 14%	max 13%	max 12%			Attainment gap' refers to the difference between the proportion of White students gaining a first or upper second class honours degree and the proportion of BME students gaining a first or upper second class honours degree

**Notes**

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

**Table 7b** - Other milestones and targets.

Number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	To engage year 10 and 11 students from the targeted cohorts in a coordinated programme of interventions over a one or two year period (eg Junior University; work with sponsored Academy in West Cumbria)	Yes	2011	50 (students engaged in Junior University)	300 students	300 students	300 students	300 students		
2	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	To work in collaboration with FE partners to strengthen the progression of vocational learners, including apprentices, into HE	Yes	2011	0	200 students	200 students	200 students	200 students		

**Optional commentary on milestones.**

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.