

Access Agreement

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Principal Contact for Enquiries

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1. Introduction

Embedded into The University of Manchester's strategic plan¹ is our commitment to being an open, meritocratic institution that pro-actively seeks out people capable of benefiting from higher education, removes barriers to their participation and in so doing contributes to the expansion of higher education opportunities, nationally and internationally. Since 2006 this has been given substance through the largest overall investment in the Russell Group of universities into packages of equity and merit scholarships and bursaries and educational outreach work facilitating progression into higher forms of learning for talented students from all backgrounds.

This three year Access Agreement forms a sub-set of a much broader strategy, where the University positions its work to expand access to higher education opportunities within an overall commitment to:

- **superb undergraduate education** attracting outstanding students and producing graduates distinguished by professional employability, leadership qualities and a personal sense of social responsibility;
- **equality and diversity** as reflected in policies, practices and support systems that encourage talented people, whatever their background, to study at The University of Manchester; and;
- **social responsibility** where we are engaged in the social, cultural and economic development of Greater Manchester, England's North West and the UK.

We therefore set this Access Agreement for levying variable tuition fees² for home³ full-time⁴ undergraduate⁵ programmes of study within the context of the opportunities this affords the University to secure and strengthen its exemplary position in relation to fair access and expanding higher education opportunities.

2. Framework for promoting fair access

The University of Manchester is recognised as a leading institution in the national agenda to expand higher education opportunities and participation. We have developed a sophisticated framework based on the following key principles:

- that promoting progression to higher education generally, particularly within our most local communities where progression rates into higher education are among the lowest in the UK, will be accorded the same priority as our work to seek out talented students for entry specifically to The University of Manchester;
- that expanding fair access to higher education must be addressed at each stages of the 'student lifecycle'.

Our framework for promoting fair access to higher education builds on the important work by the HEFCE in developing a national Higher Education Progression Framework⁶, but extends this by recognising that work to widen access continues within and beyond higher education entry.

¹ Available at <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/facts/vision/>

² In 2008/09 the tuition fee level was set at £3145 and is expected to rise thereafter at an inflationary rate as set out by the SLC and DIUS.

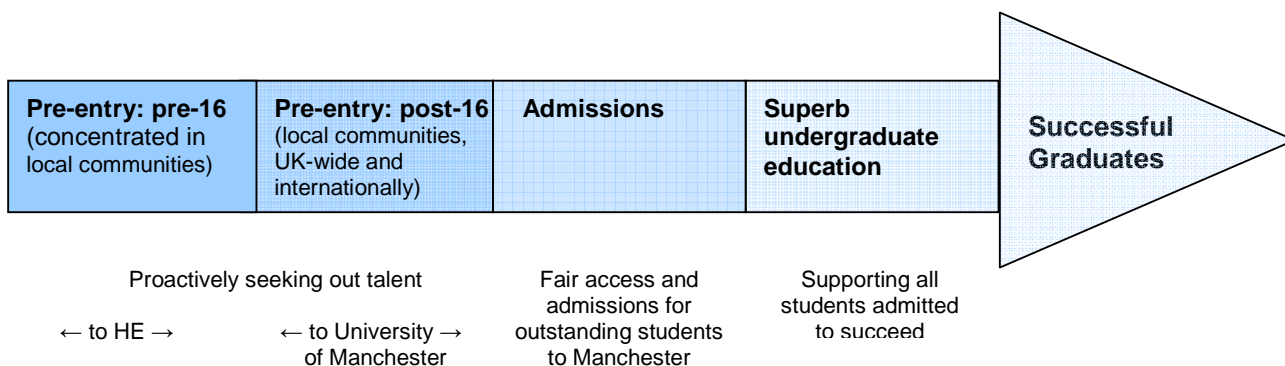
³ We do not provide financial support to non-UK EU students as our bursaries relate to maintenance costs as opposed to fees. However, we will not differentiate between English and other UK students for maintenance scholarships and bursaries.

⁴ Information on fees and support for part-time students is not required as part of this Access Agreement.

⁵ The only exception is that variable tuition fees are also applied to Postgraduate Certificate in Education programmes, where students are also entitled to state support and university bursaries.

⁶ Available at <http://www.actiononaccess.org/download.php?f=1148>

Figure 1: University of Manchester 'Extended Higher Education Progression Framework'



2.1 Pre-entry activities: Pre-16

Our priorities to expand opportunity and access to higher education are placed within the context of the profound and interconnected role universities play in the development of knowledge, the economy and wider society – be it regionally, nationally or internationally. We are acutely aware that expanding access to higher education is important not only to our nation’s economic success, but also for reasons of social justice and mobility. We view the dramatic inequalities in higher education participation based on locality, schooling and other socio-economic factors, borne out each year by UCAS and HESA data, as being inherently unjust. We therefore take seriously our role in reaching out to younger learners and their key influencers, particularly in our local primary and secondary schools and colleges, to raise awareness and capacity for progression into higher education through a coordinated programme of outreach work promoting progression not only to Manchester, but to higher education more generally. As well as input from each of our four academic Faculties, the University’s special assets⁷ – the Manchester Museum, Whitworth Art Gallery, Race Relations Resource Centre, John Rylands Library and Jodrell Bank – are unique resources of the university committed to providing additional ‘gateways’ to the University through curriculum enrichment activity and providing access to collections, specialist knowledge and research resources.

To ensure our higher education outreach work is targeted appropriately at learners who might not otherwise consider progression to higher education as an option, the University has developed and published its own ‘Manchester Prioritisation Model’⁸ for working with local schools and colleges across Greater Manchester based on statistical weightings of key socio-economic (Free School Meals/Education Maintenance Allowance) and geo-demographic (Low Participation Neighbourhoods) variables relating to under-representation in HE. Schools and colleges across Greater Manchester are placed into one of four different priority bands, and those with high levels of socio-economic deprivation and low participation rates in HE are accorded greater priority in the University’s outreach engagements. This is a tool the University is using for the Area Level Targeting recommended by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)⁹ and has provided an objective basis for targeting engagement with schools and colleges since 2004.

Through a substantial re-investment of tuition fee income the University has accorded priority to a comprehensive programme of pre-16 work that is delivered in our most local communities each year. This consists of coordinated Manchester Gateway Programme¹⁰ supplemented by mentoring, campus visits, student ambassador, summer school and curriculum enrichment and enhancement opportunities. More extensive details and outputs of this work can be found in our annual report published each year at

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/undergraduate/WP-report.pdf>

⁷ For further information see <http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/> ; <http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/> ; <http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/> ; <http://www.jb.man.ac.uk/> ; <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/ahmediqbal/> ; see, for example, M. Crow, & J. Skyrme, <http://www.actiononaccess.org/download.php?f=639> ; http://www.arn.mmu.ac.uk/symposia_4.htm

⁹ Higher Education Funding Council for England *Higher education outreach: targeting disadvantaged learners* http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_12/07_12.doc

¹⁰ See www.manchester.ac.uk/gateways

2.2 Pre-entry activities: Post-16

Our post-16 programme of activity concerns itself with proactively identifying students of outstanding achievement and potential for progression to The University of Manchester, irrespective of background. This activity consists of:

- a UK-wide strategy of attendance at key events and conventions for Level 3 learners considering higher education;
- a programme of presentations by key University staff on HE choices, the application process, student finance and student life;
- weekly campus-visit opportunities each Wednesday, including special sessions for mature learners;
- targeted events for adult returners to HE, students with disabilities and looked-after children;
- a programme of subject Masterclasses, workshops and discovery days for level three learners.

In addition, we deliver our flagship progression initiative, the Manchester Access Programme (MAP), to support outstanding students from underrepresented groups in Greater Manchester to enter The University of Manchester or another research-intensive university. The two-year programme consists of a series of structured pedagogic and aspiration-raising activities to address the fact that, even when they have similar qualifications, students from under-represented groups are less likely to apply and be successful in entering institutions and courses with the most demanding entry qualifications. MAP students complete an academic assignment with support from University academic staff, the successful completion of which is equated to 40 UCAS points towards entry onto a degree course at The University of Manchester. The Manchester Access Programme has expanded each year since its inception in 2005 and further information can be found at www.manchester.ac.uk/map.

A range of other progression opportunities and foundation year programmes into specific subject disciplines are also organised by the university, the impact of which can be found each year at <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/undergraduate/WP-report.pdf>

2.3 Fair Admissions

The University of Manchester receive more undergraduate applications than any other UK University¹¹. Our admissions policies are reviewed and revised on an annual basis and made publicly available¹². All of our selection criteria and processes are published in relevant guidance literature (e.g. prospectus, brochures) and on web pages such as the University's own site and within 'Entry Profiles' held by the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

We are committed to ensuring that our admissions processes are able to identify students of outstanding achievement and potential. To this end, upholding the principle of entry on the basis of merit is the single most important thing we can do for our students and the UK: our overriding purpose is to seek out and attract the very best learners we can from around the UK and the rest of the world, and offer them a world class education. We are committed to ensuring that the process of student recruitment, selection and admission is transparent, fair and able to identify outstanding students from all educational backgrounds.

Applicants are assessed in equivalent ways taking into account qualifications, experience, abilities and potential in relation to the chosen programme of study. In recognition of the complex challenge of identifying the most outstanding students, some of whom will not have enjoyed equality of opportunity to good primary and secondary education, the University instigated a new programme of work on admissions as part of its strategic review of 'Teaching, Learning and the Student

¹¹ For entry in 2008 the University received some 55,944 applications as at 30 June UCAS census date.

¹² http://www.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/undergraduate/student_admissions_policy.pdf

Experience' which has made recommendations to take forward further progress in our admissions practices in the coming years¹³.

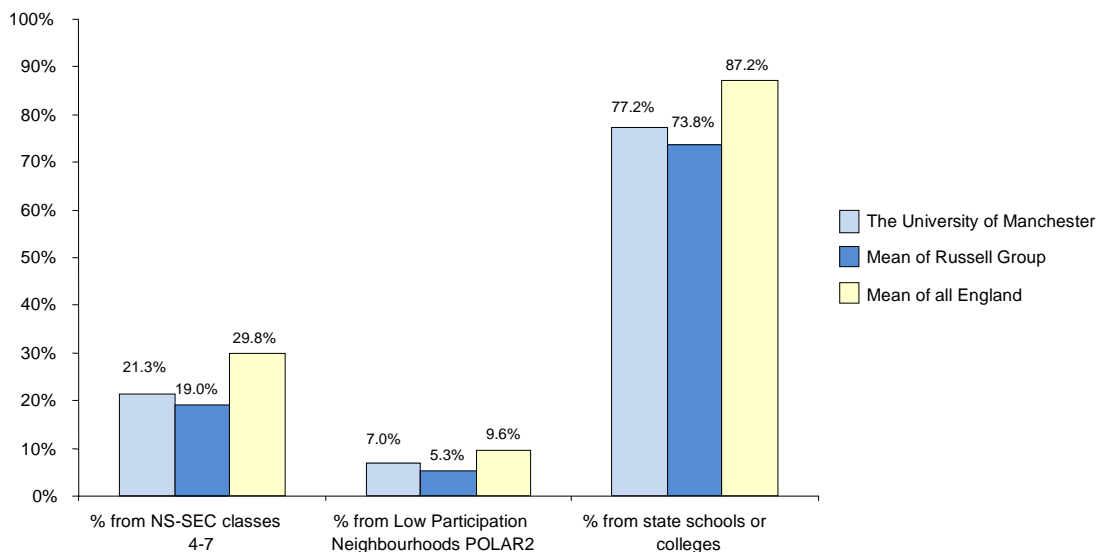
In order to monitor patterns of admissions to The University of Manchester of students from different social and educational backgrounds we annually analyse our HESA Performance Indicator (PI) data. These give information about the participation of groups that are under-represented in HE, and are produced separately for young and mature students.

Table 1: Percentage of Young Entrants to Full-time First Degree Course

Year	Lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 4-7)	Low participation areas (POLAR2)	State Schools and Colleges
2004/05	21.2 (22.3)	n/a	77.9 (79.8)
2005/06	20.7 (23.0)	7.3 (6.1)	77.7 (80.2)
2006/07	21.3 (23.0)	7.0 (6.6)	77.2 (80.6)

Whilst continuing to enhance the quality of our undergraduate intake, as measured by UCAS tariff score on entry, we have been able to perform favourably in relation to each of our PIs. Furthermore, comparison of The University of Manchester with the Russell Group¹⁴ (comprising institutions with similar PI benchmarks) shows that we perform at least as well and usually better than the Group average.

Figure 2: Comparison of The University of Manchester with UK HE sector mean and the mean of Russell group of Universities for young full-time degree entrants¹⁵



Additionally some 17.1% of our mature undergraduate entrants, with no previous HE experience, were from low participation neighbourhoods, exceeding the University's benchmark of 13.0% by a statistically significant amount¹⁶.

¹³ For further information see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/reviewteachinglearning/>

¹⁴ The Russell Group is an association of 20 major research-intensive universities of the United Kingdom See <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/home.html>

¹⁵ Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Performance Indicators 2006/07

¹⁶ Ibid.

2.4 Superb undergraduate education: supporting student success

2.4.1 Scholarships and bursaries

We know that many prospective students are deterred from seeking access to a university because of cultural reasons, including a fear of student debt, or because of the opportunity cost of remaining out of the full-time workforce during their student years. The University of Manchester has taken seriously the potential impact that the introduction of variable tuition fees may have on students from under-represented groups and has made the largest investment in the UK Russell Group of Universities in packages of equity and merit scholarships for talented students who might otherwise be denied a higher education for reasons of financial disadvantage¹⁷. These awards consist of:

- **Manchester Guarantee Bursary** - £1,250pa for UK students with residual household incomes of up to approximately £25,000 per annum¹⁸ (and includes the minimum standard bursary¹⁹ for UK students who are receiving maximum state support).
- **Manchester Advantage Scholarship** - £3,000pa for UK students with residual household incomes of up to approximately £25,000 per annum²⁰ who attain three A grades at A-level or equivalent²¹.
- **Manchester Achievement Scholarship** - £1,750pa for outstanding students progressing successfully through our two-year Manchester Access Programme. This award is supported by the *Your Manchester Fund*²² - generous financial support from the University's alumni and friends who wish to assist high-achieving students from underrepresented backgrounds to progress to the University, especially those from our local communities in Greater Manchester. Some Manchester Achievement Awards are also targeted at local mature students progressing onto specific study programmes via an Access to HE route²³.
- **Manchester Success Scholarships** - £1,250pa for students performing at the highest level of academic excellence progressing onto specific degree programmes²⁴.

Additionally the University is offering a number of:

- **Accommodation Awards** – whereby the Trustees of a University Hall of Residence meet the full accommodation costs of a number of local students who would otherwise be prevented from experiencing the residential side to university life.
- **International Equity and Merit Scholarships** – awards covering full fees and living costs for students in developing countries. A total of 17 awards in 2006/07 and 2007/08 were awarded to Ugandan undergraduate and postgraduate students studying on courses that were likely to be of greatest benefit to their home country. Again these awards are generously supported by the *Your Manchester Fund*²⁵.

The University of Manchester takes seriously the potential impact that variable tuition fees may have on students from underrepresented social groups and have therefore set ourselves a

¹⁷ See the Office for Fair Access Annual Report for 2006-07 at <http://www.offa.org.uk/about/publications/monitoring2006-07/>

¹⁸ Assessment and income bands will be revised in accordance with criteria used by the DIUS and SLC.

¹⁹ For 2008/09 this figure was £310 although this will be revised in accordance with criteria used by DIUS and the SLC

²⁰ See note 18.

²¹ See <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/funding/home/criteriaofexcellence/>

²² See www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni for more information

²³ See <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/funding/home/scholarships-0910/> for more information

²⁴ Full information is available at <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/funding/home/scholarships-0910/>
<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/funding/home/criteriaofexcellence/>

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²⁵ See <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/international/country/africa/display/index.htm?id=106068> &

<http://www.yourmanchester.manchester.ac.uk/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1008&srcid=424> for more information

milestone in relation to the provision of financial information to prospective students. We commit ourselves to providing all prospective students with information on the total and aggregate cost of their tuition throughout their course, and information on their eligibility for financial assistance at the start of the recruitment cycle in the preceding year of entry. Information will be provided through the prospectus, website and a dedicated publication. We will also ensure dissemination of this information through mail shots, attendance at higher education fairs, and other outreach activities, and will take advantage of other opportunities to provide information to national sources of information such as those offered by UCAS. This information will be reinforced at the application and offer stage. Additionally, we actively promote scholarship and bursary uptake by:

- employing a dedicated Scholarship & Bursary Officer who is responsible for working with recruitment and admissions staff in highlighting awareness of financial awards;
- highlighting our awards in our Undergraduate Prospectus, a specialist 'Guide to Student Finance' brochure and on our website, where we have developed a user-friendly 'Scholarship calculator'²⁶;
- highlighting to students, and all relevant staff, the importance of students 'consenting to share' their SLC data;
- a designated student finance stand at our Open Days which is used to publicise our scholarship and bursary schemes;
- arranging emails and text-messaging (via HEBBS²⁷) to variable fee paying students providing details of the eligibility criteria for our awards;
- allowing students to qualify for scholarships/bursaries until the end of the academic year.

2.4.2 Student social responsibility

The University of Manchester is committed to making an active contribution to the development of a secure, humane, prosperous and sustainable future for its local communities in Greater Manchester. We have set out to develop a range of opportunities to enrich the social, cultural and economic development of the region and countries in which the University works, and this begins in our immediate locality where we encourage students and staff to see service to the community as part of their responsibility as members of the University. The University therefore seeks to actively promote student engagement and leadership in the community through involvement of undergraduate and postgraduate volunteers and ambassadors in activities that help to extend educational opportunities to local pupils. These include:

- **Manchester Leadership Programme** - launched in September 2005, the Manchester Leadership Programme (MLP) is a pioneering initiative for students at The University of Manchester which encourages them to engage with the local community while boosting their personal and professional development. It combines a credit-rated Leadership in Action unit with 60 hours voluntary work. The programme aims to:
 - inspire students to embrace leadership that supports social, economic and environmentally sustainable development;
 - equip students with a portfolio of transferable skills designed to boost their employability;
 - provide students with opportunities to develop themselves and help the community through volunteering;
 - enable local communities, business and not-for-profit organisations to enrich students' learning;
 - enable the University to contribute to the development of Manchester and the region.
- **Student Ambassadors** – alongside and additional to the Manchester Leadership Programme is an annual coordinated campaign to promote student engagement in the University's access and outreach initiatives. Undergraduate and postgraduate students are making a contribution in roles as diverse as mentors, ambassadors, demonstrators,

²⁶ See <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/funding/home/scholarshipcalculator/>

²⁷ Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBBS) run by the Student Loans Company.

facilitators and tutors. Some roles are linked to particular academic subjects; other positions involve providing more general guidance and advice on higher education.

2.4.3 Teaching, Learning and the Student Experience

The University is committed to providing superb undergraduate teaching, learning and support facilities. To accelerate the pace of progress towards this goal, a major “root and branch” *Review of Undergraduate Education*²⁸ was instigated in September 2007 and an interim report published in February 2008. Eight separate Taskforces were established and these examined international best practice in relation to all key aspects of undergraduate education. Consequently some twenty-eight different recommendations were made with the overall aim of ensuring that undergraduate students would be provided with an educational experience and with educational outcomes and qualifications comparable with the best in the world.

With regard to student retention rates, the University is well above the national average and just 4.1% of our young entrants and 10.8% of our mature entrants who started in 2005/06 left higher education. This means that of 5,515 young entrants, just 155 transferred to another HE institution together with 225 leaving HE altogether.

Table 2: Non-continuation following year of entry: Full-time first degree entrants in 2005/06²⁹

	% young entrants no longer in HE	% mature entrants no longer in HE
UK	7.1	14.3
Manchester	4.1	10.8

Recognising that many students require additional financial, academic and social support, the University also provides an extensive range of services to support student success – both through the admissions process in the case of students with disabilities or cared-for backgrounds and once they are at Manchester in order to succeed. Information about all of these services can be found at www.manchester.ac.uk/undergraduate/academiclife/supportservices/

3. Access Agreement Milestones

Related to the strategy outlined above we commit ourselves to the following Milestones and will report on these to OFFA each year.

Goals	Objectives	Milestone
To ensure The University of Manchester continues to build upon its excellent track record in extending higher education opportunities to all sections of society and acts as a socially responsible and inclusive institution committed to serving the people of Greater Manchester and England's North West.	i. Work in partnership with local primary, secondary and further education providers and in collaboration with other universities to ensure there is year on year improvement in the number of young people in the local region who can enjoy the benefits of higher learning.	Each year regional progression performance to HE will be analysed and the University's contribution in achieving any change assessed.
	ii. To actively promote student engagement and leadership in the community through involvement of undergraduate and postgraduate volunteers and ambassadors in widening participation activities.	In September of each year coordinated campaigns to promote student engagement will be launched.
	iii. To maintain our current strong position in relation to performance against the three available “access indicators”: the number of students from lower socio-economic	Each year statistically analyse the University's access performance in relation in comparison to

²⁸ See <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/tlao/Pres-review-t&l/interim-report-review-ug-ed-jan-08.pdf>

²⁹ Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Performance Indicators 2005/06

	groups, low participation areas and state schools and colleges.	benchmark figures and peer research-intensive institutions.
To ensure the university can implement fair and transparent admissions policies and criteria.	iv. To equip all admissions staff with the necessary information, skills and resources so that they can identify and recruit students of outstanding achievement and potential from all educational backgrounds.	Each year the University's admissions policies and processes will be refined and a dedicated programme of briefings, guidance materials and development opportunities will be offered to admissions staff.
To ensure prospective students are aware of the long-term financial benefits of higher education, our own specific bursary and scholarship packages and the associated costs of study at the University.	v. To produce a specialist publication, keep updated webpages and offer a designated point of contact in the University for prospective students to ensure accurate financial information is accessible.	Information on scholarships and bursaries will be published for prospective students each March preceding the year of entry.
To ensure that, irrespective of background, all students have access to support programmes and learning environments enabling them to complete their studies successfully.	vi. A dedicated student retention officer will develop strategies for identifying and working with groups most at risk of non-completion.	Each year a statistical analysis will be undertaken regarding the University's student retention figures.

4. Monitoring Arrangements

Progress against this Access Agreement is monitored by the University's Planning and Resources Committee (PRC). PRC serves, *inter alia*, as the primary source of advice to the Board of Governors and the President and Vice-Chancellor on matters relating to the development and allocation of resources of the University. It is chaired by the President and Vice-Chancellor and its membership includes the Faculty Vice-Presidents and Deans, the Policy Vice-Presidents, the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance, the Head of the Planning Support Office and the General Secretary of the Students' Union.