

Access Agreement for Full time students enrolling in 2012-13 June 2011



Introduction and context

1. With 31,000 students Anglia Ruskin University is one of the largest providers of higher education in the east of England. We are pleased with the progress we are making in line with our Corporate Plan and our HEFCE benchmarks and currently setting ambitious new targets with regard to student satisfaction, engagement, success and employability.
2. From 2012/13 we are proposing to charge new full time students starting a foundation degree or Higher National Diploma/Certificate a fee of £7,500. For other new students starting a full time undergraduate course leading to a degree we are proposing to charge £8,300. We propose to increase the fees each year by any real terms rise permitted by the government. We will support students from less advantaged backgrounds by allocating 22.5% of our additional fee income to the range of measures set out in this paper.
3. This does not affect any existing undergraduate students of our university, to whom our previous access agreement applies for the duration of their course.
4. This Access Agreement also applies to students on Anglia Ruskin courses studying at one of our partner institutions in the UK.

Assessment of our retention and widening participation performance.

5. Anglia Ruskin University has a very positive trend of improving student retention. For the 'traditional cohort', of FT first degree students, our 2009-10 HESA Performance Indicators show a non-continuation rate of just 9.9%; 1 percentage point better than our benchmark performance. Our retention of PT students is exceptional with our non-continuation performance at 13.9% compared with benchmark performance of 24.5% and England performance of 33.9%.
6. Our non-continuation rates for our young FT students also show an improving performance, with 11.3% of our students failing to continue after the first year. 2009-10 saw a drop of 1.5 percentage points from the previous year and our initial challenge will be to maintain this performance and then to drive the rate even lower beyond our benchmark performance of 10.9%
7. Our student profile includes 15.4% of students from lower participation neighbourhoods and we outperform both our benchmark (by 2 percentage points) and England (by 4.5 percentage points). Our performance in 2009-10 saw a slight fall from 2008-09 and our challenge will be to arrest this trend.
8. 96.9% of our students (all entrants) are from state schools or colleges and our performance is above our benchmark (95%) and the England performance (89%). We have experienced a very gentle decline over the last four years (of just over 1 percentage point). Again we outperform our benchmark (by 4 percentage points) and England (by 7.8 percentage points) in the number of our students (all entrants) who are from NSEC Classes 4, 5, 6 & 7. These students represent 38.7% of our student profile.

9. Mature students (all entrants) from lower participation neighbourhoods make up 16.3% of our student profile which again is better than our benchmark performance of 14.9% and England (at 12%).

10. 4.3% of our students (all entrants) studying part-time have no previous HE experience and are from low participation neighbourhoods. We outperform our benchmark (at 3.8%) but are behind the England average of 7.3%. We have set ourselves challenging targets to improve our participation for this group.

11. 5.4% of our FT students are in receipt of DSA, on a par with our benchmark and better than England performance.

12. Overall, we have a good and improving performance in retention of our students from lower participation groups. We have very good participation rates for students from these groups and have set ourselves some challenging targets to improve further.

Individual Financial Support from 2012/13

13. We will provide targeted financial support to our students under the National Scholarship Programme and through our own bursaries.

The National Scholarship Programme

14. We have matched the government contribution of £3,000 by modelling the following payments to eligible full time students;

- a) Three year course - £3,000 BIS funding in year one with £1,900 from us in years two and three;
- b) Two year course - £3,000 BIS funding in year one with £1,900 from us in year two;
- c) One year course - £3,000 BIS funding in year one.

15. Students will receive a fee waiver and a range of institutional services designed to support their study. We will offer some choice in the mix of institutional services students can opt for including laptops, books, accommodation costs and credit on an institutional ID/smartcard to be used at catering outlets etc. We will provide key textbooks as part of this offer to ensure that our NSP students have their own copy of the major text for each module. This is illustrated for example (a) in the table below.

| Anglia National Scholarship Programme | £ Year 1 (govt) | £ Year 2 (ARU) | £ Year 3 (ARU) |
|--|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fee waiver | 2,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Institutional services* | 1,000 | 900 | 900 |
| | | | |
| Total | 3,000 | 1,900 | 1,900 |
| <i>*See 8 below</i> | | | |

16. As EU students are not eligible for institutional services we will give the total value of the award in the form of fee waivers.

17. In accordance with scheme rules to be eligible for a National Scholarship a student must be ordinarily resident in an English or EU household with an income of under £25,000 pa.

18. In addition we will apply the following criteria;

- Students will be from low participation neighbourhoods;
- They will achieve above average grades based on school attainment data;
- They have selected ARU (including our courses delivered at partner colleges) as a first choice.

19. Applicants who fit these criteria based on predicted grades and who get through the Admissions 'initial shortlisting' will be provisionally awarded a National Scholarship up to the maximum number we have available as below;

- In year one (2012/13) we will allocate 160 National Scholarships to full time students;
- in year two (2013/14), on the assumption that the scheme continues as the government has set out, we will allocate 320 scholarships;
- in year three (2014/15), on the assumption that the scheme continues as the government has set out, we will allocate 480 scholarships.

20. Subsequent applicants will be told they will receive our standard bursary, unless a National Scholarship becomes available, in which case we will allocate based on the order in which they applied (earliest first). We are currently considering how we will collect appropriate data for EU applicants. For mature students we will use our APEL process where school attainment data is not available.

Bursaries

21. We will continue to offer some financial support to poorer students on full time courses.

22. Students from households where income is under £25,000 will receive £1,200 for each year of their course. We estimate that in year one we will award this bursary to 340 students, in year two to 180 students and in year three to 20 students. This assumes that the numbers of students in receipt of a National Scholarship increases as set out above.

23. Students from households where income is between £25,000 and £35,000 will receive £500 for each year of their course. We estimate that we will make this award to 240 students in each year.

24. We want to ensure that the learning needs of our students are supported as well as reducing their overall fee and we will therefore offer them and their parents/sponsors some choice in how they take their support by allowing the award to be split between a fee waiver and institutional services (as above) with a minimum of one half to a maximum of two thirds for each element. EU students will receive the whole award in the form of a fee waiver.

25. Students from households where income is between £35,000 and £42,600 are included under this agreement. They will not receive direct financial support but will benefit from our other retention and success proposals targeted at all OFFA countable students.

26. We want to ensure that that student interaction with the administration of the schemes is simple, easy to understand and convenient. To this end, we will be

developing a simple online administrative interface to enable our students awarded a National Scholarship or Anglia Bursary to manage their award online and to make their choices from the options available for institutional services.

Additional access measures

27. We remain committed to seeking out potential students from non traditional HE backgrounds to encourage them to consider higher education as something that is appropriate and accessible to them. We want to raise their aspirations and to provide additional support once on-course to aid their retention, success and ability to secure a graduate job.

Outreach

28. We will continue to fund our current outreach activity at the point that AimHigher funding ends. During this interim year (2011/12) we will continue our work with regional HEI partners and school networks but will also develop these partnerships post AimHigher and to fit the new funding context.

29. We will continue to engage in a wide range of outreach activities including;

- Information, advice and guidance to school year groups 9-13 and to mature learners;
- Mentoring and buddying schemes in schools;
- Working in primary schools to begin aspiration raising to children and their families;
- Hosting on campus visits for school groups and mature learners;
- Summer schools;
- Focussing on regional 'cold spots'.

30. In addition we will research new outreach activities and plan to develop targeted projects to encourage target groups in particular regional BME communities, Looked After Children, disabled people and mature learners. We will also develop our links with schools networks and are researching formal compact schemes and staff awareness-raising with schools.

23. We are active members of regional outreach partnerships and have a reciprocal agreement with the University of Cambridge to work collaboratively in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. We will continue to work actively in the east of England to promote our university and the benefits of higher education in general and will continue to support a range of community events to encourage local people to feel that Anglia Ruskin University is accessible to them and their families.

31. We intend to increase the focus and impact of our outreach activity rather than simply the span. Table 5b in the annexes to this agreement detail our targets and milestones.

Retention and success related support

32. We are committed to supporting student success. We are aware that some of our students from less advantaged backgrounds find it challenging to engage with higher education in relation to their more advantaged peers.

33. On this basis we will provide greater support for less advantaged students, helping them to stay on course and succeed with their studies. We will also help them to find suitable graduate jobs.

34. From the 2012/13 academic year we will track and monitor all students covered by this Access Agreement using a dedicated staff resource. Using data gathered in work undertaken by us and across the sector in regard to retention, over the interim year we will develop a set of indicators to enable timely intervention based on at-risk trigger points. We will ensure that all students covered by this agreement are offered appropriate specialist support to enable them to stay on course. We are aware of the benefits that an appropriate attendance monitoring system will bring to retention, and as such we will be implementing a new system, in part to assist us with tracking students at risk. A minor part of the cost of this system has been allocated from our additional fee income.

35. We are mindful that many students from less advantaged backgrounds lack appropriate study skills to succeed in higher education. We will resource additional study support specialists to provide tailored on-line and hard copy materials for students covered by this agreement and to provide supporting workshops for those students who would benefit.

36. We are already in the process of implementing an Employability Strategy. However, we understand that for many students from less advantaged backgrounds, entering the professions is a bigger hurdle than for others. We will provide support for all of our students but from year two of this agreement (2013/14) we will provide a dedicated employability specialist to find and create opportunities in the professions for students from less advantaged backgrounds.

37. Targets and milestones in relation to participation and retention are shown in table 5a. It should be noted that at present we do not have appropriate data to enable the setting of clear targets for success and employment outcomes for students covered under this agreement. However, as soon as we can establish a baseline we will develop milestones and targets.

Data and monitoring

38. Targets and milestones are set out in the published annexes to this document. We will monitor our progress and revise our targets and activities accordingly in order to ensure that we achieve the aims set out in this Access Agreement.

39. Further comments on our use of data are below;

Identification of target areas

- We will use HEFCE POLAR data to identify 'cold spots'. We will map our students to the 'cold spots' to show our relative success in attracting students from those 'cold spots'. We will use this data to target our outreach activity.
- We will use the national HEFCE Performance Indicators to identify those groups which are underrepresented in our student community and those groups where retention is below benchmark.

Monitoring our performance

- We map the postcodes of student applications and registered students against the HEFCE POLAR data to monitor the effectiveness of our outreach activities in attracting students from our targeted areas.
- We will develop an in-house data model to allow us to monitor our retention and participation data of our OFFA countable students at regular intervals.
- We will use a number of techniques to ensure the quality of our outreach work including, monitoring understanding pre and post events, visitor/attendee feedback etc.

- The draft of our new Corporate Plan (2012-14) includes a commitment to 'Provide early advice for our students on what they should be aiming for to ensure that they have good career prospects at the end of their course and incorporate this in their individual learning plans – including where appropriate a focus on such employability skills as digital literacy and language skills.' We will separately monitor those students who are 'OFFA countable' to ensure that they are achieving their individual learning and employability goals. Once we have established a baseline we will develop milestones and targets for success and employment outcomes.

Target Setting

- Where our current performance is below benchmark, we have set challenging targets for the National HEFCE PIs to ensure our performance rises to be above benchmark. Where our performance is at or above benchmark we have set targets which rise above current improvement trends.

Information provided to prospective students

40. From a potential applicant's first contact with Anglia Ruskin University we aim to provide accurate, informative and timely help and advice throughout the enquiry and application process.

41. We provide;

- A Contact Centre to respond to a wide range of enquiries from applicants
- Online enquiry services via a dedicated email address or online form
- Prospectuses online and in hard copy
- A range of information about being a student, including funding and advice about course choice, via our website
- Staff presentations and literature at our open days/evenings
- Our dedicated 'open day' microsite which provides information for those attending as well as a 'virtual open day' online
- Information directly from specialist staff in Student Services – in person, online, by phone or email. We are currently developing online services via webcam to enable enquirers in remote locations to contact us.
- Information sessions for regional teachers, careers advisers and other IAG staff working with prospective students
- Provide specialist information and advice and an assessment centre for applicants with disabilities.

42. In order to assist applicants we will provide timely information to UCAS and to the SLC in order to reasonably assist them in populating their applicant-facing web services.

Responsibility for Monitoring and Evaluation

43. Delivery of our Access Agreement will be the responsibility of the Director of Finance, the Director of Student Services and the Pro-Vice Chancellor Corporate and International Development, overseen by the Corporate Management Team, which is led by the Vice-Chancellor. The Agreement will be monitored by our Strategic Planning and Policy Unit and outcomes will be reported to the Corporate Management Team and to relevant university committees, including our Senate, all of which include student representatives.

