

# ACCESS AGREEMENT: 2012/13

## INTRODUCTION

London South Bank University's record in widening participation and access to higher education speaks for itself. We exceed benchmarks within an already highly-diverse section of the population and present an opportunity to enter higher education for thousands of students who would not easily achieve access elsewhere in the sector.

This commitment brings with it challenges in terms of enabling our students to progress smoothly through their degree courses and, overall, in terms of retention within the University. Whilst we have done much in the past to focus on this matter, and have done well in terms of meeting our HESA performance indicator benchmarks for continuation and retention, we aim to do far better in this area, to ensure that our students have the greatest possible chance of success in an increasingly demanding and competitive environment.

This Access Agreement, then, represents the first of a number of transitional documents, which will see our students through the process of implementation of a new fee system and align this with a re-focusing of activity, to ensure that we continue to meet benchmarks for access and widening participation whilst targeting increased resource on activity to support retention and progression. This will be a phased transition, as our current financial commitment to students is significant, and our bursary payments are 'back loaded' (to focus on rewarding progression and achievement). In 2012/13, we will have significantly less resource to put into new measures than in subsequent years, and much of our activity is dependent on current funding priorities remaining in place to support a wider framework of activity than is possible through fee income alone. We retain an absolute commitment to matching the level of funding available to our students through the National Scholarship Programme. Additionally, we will invest funds currently targeted at bursaries to support as wide a constituency of our students as possible.

The cornerstones of activity within this phase of operation will be:

- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 100 students (including £3,000 national scholarship element).
- Fee waivers of £3,000 (including £3,000 national scholarship element) for 150 students.
- Fee waivers of £1,000 for 1,425 students from households with residual incomes below £25,000 per annum.
- Care Leavers entering the University will receive a £1,000 travel allowance and a £750 bursary for all three years of study.
- Targeted support for our students, focusing on personal support, advice and guidance.
- Increased investment in employability development.

We will continue to support current students through bursary payments, which should largely be phased out by 2014/15. As this level of support diminishes, we will increase the level of support offered through matched funding for the National Scholarship Programme and our own scholarships, to include support for the 2012-entry cohort throughout their full-time course, targeted at those students who make the most significant achievements during their studies and progress most satisfactorily.

This level of support will see a slightly-reduced number of bursaries available to this cohort throughout 2012/14 and 2014/15, until 'steady state' is achieved in 2014, with the following levels of support:

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LEVEL 1:

- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 100 students (including £3,000 national scholarship element).
- Fee waivers of £3,000 for 350 students (including £3,000 national scholarship element).
- Fee waivers of £1,000 fee waivers for 500 students.

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LEVEL 2:

- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 80 students.
- Fee waivers of £3,000 for 120 students.
- Fee waivers of £1,000 fee for 600 students.

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LEVEL 3:

- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 40 students.
- Fee waivers of £3,000 fee waivers for 70 students.
- Fee waivers of £1,000 fee for 400 students.

## CONTEXT

London South Bank University has a history of supporting access to advanced education, which stretches back to its foundation, in 1893. Schedule A of the 'Scheme of the Charity Commissioners' for the Borough Road Polytechnic Institute, of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1891 states that:

'The object of the Institute is the promotion of Industrial skill, general knowledge, health and well-being of young men and women belonging to the poorer classes ...'

Today, our mission statement reflects that:

*We are about creating opportunity for our students and equipping them to become highly successful in their chosen field. Our focus is on the professions. Widening participation is achieved by delivering success for our students. We can help create the best possible opportunities for our students to succeed.*

This Access Agreement focuses on maintaining our tradition, reputation and achievement in widening access and participation for students from non-traditional backgrounds, whilst concentrating our efforts on enabling those students to achieve their professional and academic goals. The opportunity afforded us by the re-focusing of funding enables us to strengthen our work in the areas of retention and progression for all our students.

London South Bank University's record in the higher education of students from non-traditional backgrounds speaks for itself. Currently, 98.7% of our students come from state schools, and, nationally, we have the highest proportion of students from families with free school meals in the UK. 58% of our students are non-white in origin. 43% study part-time, and 85% are over the age of 21 on entry to the University. We have also been awarded the *Buttle Trust* quality mark for our work with care leavers.

LSBU has an extensive outreach programme through work currently funded by Aim Higher, as well as through our Academy of Sport, the Confucius Institute and through direct interventions by academic staff. We have built progression accords with local partner institutions across all areas of our work, concentrating on curriculum mapping and partnership working to focus on the successful progression of students into higher education.

In total, it is estimated that, each year, the University reaches some 12,500 students in 150 schools and 50 Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges, through outreach activity, split approximately:

- Primary: 5%
- Ages 11-16: 40%
- Year 12-13: 55%.

In addition, the Confucius Institute, which focuses on inspiring students through Chinese language and culture, reached 20,000 students in 45 schools, with an equal balance of activity between primary and secondary schools.

Whilst we are proud of our progress in helping students to succeed (we are currently ranked in the top 25% of UK higher education institutions for adding value to our students by the Guardian League Table) we recognize that there is more to be done in this area. In particular, we wish to concentrate further effort on student progression, building on our current work in this area to help more students progress smoothly through their courses. We applaud the opening up of funding to part-time students, which we feel will have an important impact upon this progression rate – with more and more students opting for part-time routes into higher education, which best suit their domestic and economic environments.

## FEE LIMITS AND FEE INCOME ABOVE £6,000

Within the uncertain future that lies in front of all higher education institutions during the coming years, London South Bank University has focused its attention on:

- Ensuring that we remain financially stable, with sufficient resource to re-invest in student success, facilities and our fabric and structure.
- Ensuring that we maintain a transparent and equitable pricing strategy, which leaves no one group of students disadvantaged at the expense of another.
- Ensuring that we continue to maintain opportunities for partnership working with local further education colleges (in particular), maximizing the opportunity to develop our work in progression and in enabling those students with the best chances of success to aspire to higher education.
- Ensuring that we are able to increase our focus on student support and development, building on current plans and developments (including the building of a new Student Centre, at the cost of some £10 million, which will come into operation in September 2012) and concentrating on academic support and guidance, pastoral care, employability and skills development.

In this context, the University has decided on a simple pricing structure for our courses (reflecting both the current commitments to continued funding for strategically important and vulnerable subjects and to maintaining funding for widening participation and teaching enhancement, alongside the fees paid by students) with a range of fees from £5,950 (for students studying for LSBU awards within partner colleges) to £8,450 (for students studying for LSBU awards within the University, or where awards are delivered both within the University and within partner colleges). These fees apply to full-time undergraduate students only, but we see no reason (subject to the release of guidance on part-time fee and access measures) why a similar structure would not apply to part-time students.

In 2012/13, the anticipated overall intake, under the Student Number Control measures introduced in 2009, is targeted at 3,139 FTE for full-time undergraduate students. Of these, some 650FTE are currently subject to fees below the higher regulated fee. Taking into account this balance of

students across our various undergraduate degree programmes, we estimate that our average fee will be £8,390. Taking into account the effect of fee waivers, this average will fall below £7,500 per FTE. Our continued support for students who enter in 2012 and make significant achievement and progress within their full-time courses in 2013 and 2014 will ensure that our overall fee, for this cohort, throughout all years of study, falls within £7,500 per annum.

We would expect to raise fees, year-on-year, in line with inflation, in line with the current practice for regulated fees. However, we will also need to review our pricing structure, and the number of fee waivers available, particularly in the first, transitional, years of operation, as the stability and certainty of parallel funding streams, and HEFCE's guidance within this area, becomes clearer.

## EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

As the introduction to this Access Agreement makes clear, London South Bank University is already highly successful in the field of widening access to, and participation within, higher education.

Current HESA performance indicators on access and participation show that the University performs well in those measures which focus both upon the participation of under-represented groups within higher education and on the continuation measures used by HESA. We exceed benchmarks in all widening participation measure and meet or exceed them in most continuation measures.

Areas of our student population that would benefit from increased, targeted resource, are:

- Students within NS-SEC classifications 4 to 7 who apply to courses at a lower level than first degree.
- Mature students from low-participation neighbourhoods.

To enhance access for these groups, we have decided to continue to work with partner colleges at a lower overall fee level than that which we would charge for the courses delivered on campus. We will also continue to support student entry through Access Courses (we are currently the 6<sup>th</sup> highest recruiter of Access students in the UK) and target our outreach work with local partner colleges so as to encourage participation from mature students.

Our success rates on continuation measures have improved, year on year, since 2007, and nearly 90% of full-time undergraduate students continue in higher education after first enrolling. We recognize, from internal analysis, that our students face challenges in progressing smoothly between the levels of their course, and will, from time to time, reduce their level of study to accommodate re-takes or repeat years by part-time study. Internal evidence would reflect that this is a product of students working (sometimes nearly full-time) alongside their studies and we feel that the widening of loan support to part-time students will have significant impact upon this behavior, with greater numbers of students electing a part-time route from the start of their course.

The terms of the advice issued by the Office for Fair Access, would suggest that we should aim to commit around 15% of the fee income we receive over £6000 on access and retention measures (circa £1.8 million for full-time students). Currently, the University also receives ca. £5.66 million directly through HEFCE targeted allocations – either widening participation or teaching enhancement and student success and much of our continued additional investment in this area of activity is dependent on HEFCE funding priorities remaining static.

It is our intention, within the terms of this Access Agreement (but also, looking forward to 2013 and beyond) to shift the balance of our activity away from reasonably universal bursary payments towards targeted and focused activity which maintains our current relationship with HESA performance indicators for widening participation and which helps us to improve our performance in the areas of retention and student success. This intention will be supported by improved information, advice and guidance, during the application process, to make applicant aware of the new funding opportunities available for part-time study and to help to ensure that the ‘fit’ between applicant and mode of study provides the best-possible opportunities for success.

Our current bursary payments are targeted towards rewarding progression and success, and split between the three years of a standard full-time programme in the proportions:

- Year 1: £500
- Year 2: £900.
- Year 3: £900.
- Graduation bonus £250.

This adds up to a total payment of £2,550. This means that, in 2012/13, £1.2m of funding is available to support new entrants, and we are targeting this resource on scholarship payments of up to £1,000 for entrants from low-income households (subject to an overall expenditure of no more than £1.2m). As our ‘historic’ commitment to bursary payments diminishes, we will utilize more of the available resource to support retention activity for continuing students, but will very much rely on current levels of targeted allocation from HEFCE to support our more general outreach activity. It is, therefore, vital to the work of the University that HEFCE’s current strategic ambitions to retain targeted allocations for widening participation and teaching enhancement and student success remain in place.

The University already has a significant number of care leavers amongst our student body. We are keen to ensure that our commitment to these students increases, so we intend to offer a £1,000 per annum travel scholarship together with a £750 per annum bursary to all care leavers entering the University. We feel that these measures will have the greatest effect in supporting Care Leavers and provide them with the greatest level of practical support during their time here.

## ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

### OUTREACH

Current activities will move away from the general bursary and untargeted outreach interventions to a focused approach in our priority catchment areas (in the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, as well as young people and mature learners in key feeder schools and colleges in the London Boroughs of Bexley, Croydon, Havering, Newham and Tower Hamlets).

This will enable us to measure progress, and ensure that our monies are invested in making a real difference to the success of these students.

The strategic approach is to have partnership arrangements in place with key schools and FE colleges, which include appropriate interventions and enable engagement of students with Higher Education from Year 7 onwards.

The range of interventions will vary, but will include:

- Supporting students in our community in sixth forms and Further Education Colleges to prepare for studying at Higher Education level, in those subject areas covered by the University (for example, through “taster” sessions, and mentoring).
- Encouraging and supporting adults in the community to re-enter education (for example, with a range of “taster” courses, working with employers to develop appropriate pathways).
- Working with students aged 13-16 and their teachers, to help them to understand what is needed to succeed in Higher education, and to support them in achieving minimum GCSE.
- Inspiring younger students in our community to aspire to Higher Education, through projects and visits to the University.
- Introducing a ‘passport’ for students, keeping them in touch with the University throughout their career in secondary education.

We will seek to work with one or more other HEIs to provide a “joined up” approach for the institutions, and enable the best use of resources, in the absence of Aim Higher funding, and are in touch with a number, including London South Aim Higher, Aspire and AccessHE.

We will also use LSBU Confucius Institute, which is jointly funded by a Chinese government educational initiative, and reached 20,000 students in 45 schools, split 50% primary and secondary schools in 2010/11, to inspire young people to achieve and aspire to Higher Education.

## STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

Over the past two years, the University has invested much in terms of enhancing our focus on student retention and success. This has included a long-term project on Student Transition and Retention, which is currently in the second of its three phases of activity. The first two phases have focused upon determining information needs aimed at identifying students who are at risk of dropping out, or who are engaging less with their course than would normally be expected. This work has helped us develop a Progression Analysis Tool and in developing data reports around student 'points of contact' both of which are available at course level to all academic staff. We are now working on a more defined attendance monitoring system, using electronic 'swipe card' technology to link attendance to timetable information and build up an accurate picture of student attendance within individual course sessions. At the same time, we are developing on-line systems for recording and tracking the submission and return of assessed coursework – enabling us to not only quickly identify students who fail to submit coursework at the first opportunity, but also to focus our attention on the return of marked work and feedback from the tutor – an area of development for all institutions, following reflections by students through the National Student Survey.

Further development of this project is dependent on the focus of additional resource into our work, as the first two stages have been the least demanding in these respects. The final phase of the project is to make full use of the data sources we are developing and to develop 'interventions' which react to this information and develop our work with students – either through targeted support for individuals (or groups identified within particular course cohorts) or by development of our delivery methods (either the structure or timing of delivery) to better suit the needs of our students.

One area of development, here, simply relates to 'human intervention' and requires the devotion of staff time (either through the re-focusing of the activity of existing staff, or the creation of new posts) to following-up 'at risk' students. Our plans, here, concentrate on cross-University responses to particular signs of disengagement – from follow-up communications to interviews and targeted support. This is a time-consuming activity, but central, we feel, to more fully supporting our students. Another area, working within our overall ambitions for our new Student Centre, focuses on the creation of a suite of on-line support tools for students, pointing them to sources of advice and information and ensuring that they have access to 'blended' support which balances face-to-face contact with on-line. This is particularly important for our part-time students, who may not have access to the University at times when key staff members are at their most available. However, we are not intending to rely wholly on 'virtual' support mechanisms, and are in developing discussion with dedicated counselling organisations (and other educational providers) as to the opportunities to bring their work onto our campus. Ideally, we would do this in partnership with other (higher education and further education) providers, developing shared services and expertise in this area across as wide an area of South London as possible.

Another key aspect of our work on retention and success, is to look at the way we deliver our courses – particularly within the first year of study (level 4) – to ensure that we focus on a phase of 'extended induction' which works well beyond the first weeks of the first semester. Pilot projects in



some course areas have demonstrated that course structure in the first year – particularly in the transition from semester one to semester two – can have a real impact upon student engagement. The University is currently engaged in a major Curriculum Modernisation Project, examining the structure of all our courses. We will move away from a common mode of delivery towards a devolved structure which ensures the best fit between module and course, and which focuses upon the level, or course, as well as the individual, modular, ‘building blocks’ of study. The completion date for this work is 2015; it is important that as well as looking at the structure of delivery, we are also able to develop further opportunities for student engagement outside formal class-contact hours – another aspect of student support which requires additional human resource in its delivery.

Lastly, focusing again on the choices students make and the impact of decisions made early within a course on overall progression and success, we would aim to widen the opportunity for part-time study within the University. This will be both through the further development of designated part-time courses (delivered outside ‘traditional’ contact times and in a variety of modes – such a ‘block delivery’) and through making available part-time modes of study within as many of our courses as possible. Alongside this, we have recently embarked on a widespread consultation with staff and students over the structure of our academic year – discussion which, it is hoped, will provide further opportunities to develop support systems and to enhance progression and retention across the University.

#### FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS (INCLUDING SUPPORT UNDER THE NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME)

The precise terms of delivery for the National Scholarship Programme are not yet available, but the University is able to confirm that we are committed, over time, to matching the funding available to our students through this initiative (which is indicated to be £450k in the first year, presumably rising to *ca* £1.3 million in the final phase of implementation). We are targeting this resource on full and partial fee waivers for 150 students in 2012/13, rising to 450 students in 2014/15.

With 24.7% of our students falling into the least-advantaged sectors of society (a figure provided by recent research undertaken by the Sutton Trust) and our proportions of students from NSSEC groups 4-7 averaging around 47%, we anticipate no difficulty in finding appropriate recipients for this source of funding, which will be made available to students with residual household incomes lower than £25,000.

We are committed to providing meaningful levels of support to students through this scheme and will focus our expenditure upon:

1. Providing full fee waivers of up to £8,450 for 100 applicants. These will be competitively allocated
2. Providing a fee waiver of £3000 for an additional 150 students who are eligible for the National Scholarship Programme. These will also be competitively allocated
3. Care Leavers entering the University will receive a £1000 travel allowance and a £750 bursary for all three years of study.

4. In addition to our matched funding commitment, we will, in 2012/13 allocate up to an additional £1.425m in fee waivers to students from low-income households.

All awards will only be available to candidates who have firmly accepted a conditional, or unconditional, offer by 28th June, 2012. Applicants must also have applied for loan funding through the Student Loan Company (and, thus, submitted all the necessary proofs of household income for this process. We will use Student Loan Company information to determine household income levels – and all the fee waivers are offered to students from households with a residual income below £25,000)).

Applicants must also have fully met the conditions upon which their place was first offered.

All applicants with a residual household income lower than £25,000 will receive some level of fee waiver, for one year (up to £1,000, subject to the availability of funding and an overall cap of £1,425,000 in 2012/13).

Applications will be invited for the higher-level fee waivers (£8,450 and £3,000) by 2 routes:

- Approximately half will be allocated to students from schools and colleges in the local community, or from whom historically students for LSBU are drawn
- The other half, general scholarships, will be targeted towards mature students, and will be awarded to reflect the geographical spread of LSBU students: local London Boroughs ( Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Croydon, Bexley), with a number also allocated to Greater London, and nationally

Students must submit a personal statement, demonstrating their commitment to their future career and previous practical or academic achievement and all applications must meet the deadlines below:

- Schools / colleges: apply to UCAS by 15.1.12; accept firm offer and apply for finance and scholarship by 30.3.12
- General scholarships: accept firm offer and apply for finance and scholarship by 7.6.12
- **Selection.**
  - Details to be confirmed. Academic criteria will be set, at or above the standard entry criteria
  - For schools and colleges, the University will agree a nomination process with partner institutions
  - Shortlisted candidates will be invited for a written assessment, and successful candidates will be invited to a confirmation interview

Eligibility and application within one category will not preclude the applicant from consideration within another category (i.e. a candidate applying for a complete fee waiver may still receive a £1,000 fee waiver, but would not receive this in addition to a higher award).

We will continue this support for this cohort of entrants during 2013/14 and 2014/15, targeting available support on those students who achieve the best results and progress smoothly through their courses. There will be a gradual reduction in available funding, as follows, to maintain an overall fee level (after fee waivers) of under £7,500 per FTE for this cohort.

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2013 ENTRY:

LEVEL 1:

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- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 100 students (including £3,000 national scholarship element).
- £3,000 fee waivers (including £3,000 national scholarship element) for 200 students.
- £1,000 fee waivers for 1,225 students.

LEVEL 2:

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- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 80 students.
- £3,000 fee waivers for 120 students.
- £1,000 fee waivers for 600 students.

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2014 ENTRY:

LEVEL 1:

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- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 100 students (including £3,000 national scholarship element).
- £3,000 fee waivers (for one year only) for 350 students (including £3,000 national scholarship element).
- £1,000 fee waivers (for one year only) for 500 students.

LEVEL 2:

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- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 80 students.
- £3,000 fee waivers for 120 students.
- £1,000 fee waivers for 600 students.

LEVEL 3:

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- Complete fee waivers of £8,450 for 40 students.
- £3,000 fee waivers for 70 students.
- £1,000 fee waivers for 400 students.

## TARGETS AND MILESTONES

For a university such as London South Bank, the targets and milestones within our development of progression and retention are key to our evaluation of success in the development of focused activity in this area.

The University's current internal Key Performance Indicators (used at departmental level, with quarterly evaluation, as well as regularly reported to our Board) include measures which focus on retention, progression and achievement (as well as on wider aspects, such as student satisfaction).

We see our challenge within the context of the transitional phase in this period of funding as being to achieve, but no longer exceed, benchmarks for access and participation, whilst moving further towards national benchmarks for retention and success for those areas in which we currently fall just below target. This would see the University's 'clean' progression moving towards 70%, and student achievement (measured through the number of undergraduates who achieve first or upper-second class awards) to move above 60%.

We recognise that this will take time, but over the course of the first three years of development, we would aim to see steady progress – in the nature of 3-5% annual improvement – in these benchmark figures. Additionally, and following the further development of internal measures to track attendance and the submission of assessed work, we would look to establishing 'stretch targets' for each in future years.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

The University will seek to embed the monitoring of these measures within our existing governance, executive and deliberative structures, as well as developing specialised mechanisms for evaluating the success of certain core activities (such as project delivery).

The Board of Governors is already kept regularly informed regarding progress against the University's key performance indicators (both at main Board meetings, and within Policy and Resources Committee). The Audit Committee has oversight of monitoring mechanisms, in their totality, and will approve (and maintain) any such that are put into place for these measures. We aim to introduce additional performance measures (or to adapt existing ones) to ensure that the Board has oversight of our performance in achieving the commitments made within this Agreement, as well as reporting the outcomes of the various projects that we implement each year (the Board already receives an Annual Report, from Academic Board, which covers performance against HESA performance indicators as well as reporting on developmental activity in the spheres of quality assurance and enhancement, and learning and teaching development, across the University).

Within the executive, operational and deliberative spheres of the University, our existing management and committee structures allow for appropriate monitoring of individual activities, with the University Executive, and the Academic Board, maintaining strategic oversight. The

University has developed regular faculty and departmental planning meetings, which scrutinise budgetary expenditure as well as operational goals, and which use the same forms of performance measure against which we evaluate ourselves institutionally. We also have a developed, and uniform, process of project development and delivery, which includes the operation of a project board and the regular reporting of progress up to Executive level.

Students are an important part of our committee structure, with student membership of the Board of Governors (and its key sub-committees), Academic Board, Quality and Standards Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee. Students are also actively involved at faculty and course level, and within some project groups.

In line with our proposal to maintain current participation levels (within benchmark) whilst improving student progression and retention (above and beyond benchmark) the emphasis of our monitoring processes is on tracking and improving retention.

The University has established a number of means of monitoring student progression and engagement, which are drawn within a wider-ranging programme of projects titled 'Student Progression and Transition' (STAR).

The aims of STAR are to:

- a) Establish a range of mechanisms whereby student engagement and progression within their course is monitored.
- b) Establish common processes and interventions to track progression and engagement and to communicate and aid students who are at risk of withdrawal.
- c) Change practice, especially within the first year of teaching, to engage students more effectively and counter the external (or academic) forces which may militate against progression.

Projects which will be completed by the end of 2011 include:

1. A 'Progression Analysis Tool' (PAT) which allows staff to monitor progression at University, Faculty and Course levels and to 'drill down' to individual students, to examine those courses where progression seems complex or under-performing. The purpose of 'drilling down' to student level is to determine whether or not there are factors without the course itself which may be of relevance. Therefore, this information can be cross-referenced to other data sources, such as attendance and engagement (see below), academic misconduct, appeals and extenuating circumstances.
2. 'Student Points of Contact' (SPOC) information, which tracks students passing through entry gates into teaching buildings, as well as entry and log-on to library systems and to the Virtual Learning Environment. This information produces 'exception reports' which flag students who have not engaged with their classes, or with University systems, for more than three

weeks. It can be directly cross-referenced to PAT data.

3. Attendance monitoring. This is currently in its pilot phase, within the Faculty of Health and Social Care, but will be 'rolled out' to all teaching rooms with accommodation over 30 persons for the start of the new academic year (2011/12). This will allow students to 'swipe in' to the system using their Identity Cards which will register their attendance as well as the time at which they 'swiped in'. Attendance within the first 10 minutes of a class will receive a 'green' rating, and between 10 minutes and 30 minutes of the start an 'amber' rating. Attendance after 30 minutes of the start of the class will be marked 'red' and will not count as attendance for formal purposes. These data will be co-ordinated against timetable information and enable us to build up a picture of student attendance in classes across the entire curriculum. In rooms with capacity below 30 persons, the data will be recorded manually.
4. Assessment tracking. This is also, currently, in a pilot phase, within the Faculties of Arts and Human Sciences and Business. The system, simply, will allow for the 'automatic' recording of assessment submission (via a bar-coding system which enters data directly into the student records system) and will track the assessment through the process of marking and return. Not only will this enable us to make more immediate contact with students who have not submitted on the due date, but also allow us to track the time it takes to return work to students, following up in areas where this length of time seems unreasonable (or in danger of not providing students with key feedback early enough in their course).

All of this information will begin to come 'on stream' in its entirety by January 2012 and we are in the process of deciding the nature and composition of STAR boards (which already exist at University level) at faculty level to monitor and act on the information collected. This will begin with direct intervention with 'at risk' students and will move on to pedagogic development in courses where there seem to be distinct issues.

Related to this work, are two other key areas of development within 2011/12:

1. In preparation for the opening of a new Student Centre, in July 2012, we are re-defining student support services, providing a 'first-stop shop' for student support and triage of student issues –through a mixture of on-line, blended, and face-to-face provision.
2. We have established a Pedagogic Development Project, under the leadership of a senior academic, which will seek to promote on-line and blended support and delivery for students within all areas of operation.

In addition to this the Student Recruitment Committee is working on both firmly embedding the monitoring of applications to ensure that our more 'targeted' approach to admissions support is as

effective as that provided through AimHigher and on promoting the development and delivery of progression accords within our target group of partner institutions, to better enabled smooth transition from level 3 to level 4 and beyond.

## PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO EXISTING AND POTENTIAL STUDENTS

The University is committed to ensuring that all promotional materials, and information made available on University or other sites (for example, through UNISTATS and the Key Information Set) make clear how we are continuing to invest appropriately in access, whilst focusing additional activity on student success.

The University has already started communication with the student body, and will be developing future communications together with the Students' Union. In addition, in May the University will be starting a programme of personal communication with our partner schools and colleges about the changes in general, in line with BIS communications; this will ensure that students are not deterred from coming to University because of concern over the perceived impact of changes in the funding mechanism for higher education.

Once this Access agreement is approved, we will include both the specifics of our fee structure and the investments made by the University, both in recruitment materials and activities, and in communications with all our stakeholders, including current and prospective students.

**Professor Martin J. Earwicker**  
**Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive**  
**30<sup>th</sup> September 2011**





