



ACCESS AGREEMENT 2012-13

Fair Access, Widening Participation and Student Success at Aston University

This Access Agreement

- **ensures that over 67% of Aston students will be entitled to Aston University Scholarships in the form of tuition fee waivers**
- **underlines Aston's commitment to challenging widening participation targets, and to transforming the lives of students from a wide range of backgrounds**
- **proposes a subsidised tuition fee of £1,000 for a year of employer-based learning which students will be strongly encouraged to take up - emphasising the critical role placement years and work-based learning play in creating employable graduates**
- **commits Aston to improving completion and retention rates from current high levels**
- **underpins Aston's core strategic objective of delivering 'Accessible Excellence' through the provision of Scholarships targeted at students from low income families as well as those who are high achievers. 21% of students will receive scholarships aimed at low participation groups AND Aston Excellence scholarships aimed at those entrants with AAB+ or equivalent qualifications**
- **creates a new programme of regional collaboration, building on the successful AimHigher partnership.**

We believe that recent revisions made to this Access Agreement will provide further financial assistance to people from socially and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and encourage more of them to take advantage of the opportunities for social mobility and graduate level employment provided by Aston University.

Introduction

Aston University has a long-standing commitment to widening participation which is deeply embedded within the University's strategy. At the same time, Aston has also been successful in its efforts to increase the quality of entrants to its programmes. The University's integrated approach extends across the 'student lifecycle': from aspiration-raising outreach, mentoring and masterclass work with schools and colleges, to provision of a wide range of academic, learning, social and financial support services whilst at University, including enhancing employability and entrepreneurship, supporting career development and providing a sector-leading careers service, through to continuing careers support into our graduates' early careers and alumni mentoring. We want to extend opportunities for successful participation in our excellent programmes to all who are capable of benefiting from them regardless of their background. We are committed to transforming the lives of our students and focussed on giving them a great start in their careers.

Aston University has invested in excellence in teaching and learning to provide innovative support to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. As a result, the University's completion rates now consistently exceed our benchmarks. Table One below outlines Aston's record on access, retention and graduate employment success.

Over the past six years, Aston University has committed an increasing proportion of its resources to enhancing the student learning experience. We are already allocating additional funds to replace AimHigher and to continue collaborative work with three other Birmingham HEIs as part of the new Birmingham and Solihull Higher Education Progression Partnership.

Our widening participation and retention support is evidence-based, building upon research commissioned and conducted by the University and its collaborative partners into the experiences and needs of under-represented students within Higher Education (e.g. reports to Aston's Learning and Teaching Committee by Ingleby, 2009 and Gorman, 2011).

Table One: Aston University's record on Access, Retention, Student Success and Widening Participation

	Aston University	HEFCE location adjusted benchmark for Aston	UK Average
% from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN)	8.5%	8.7%	10.3%
% from social classes NS-SEC Classes 4,5,6 & 7	37.2%	30.6%	30.0%
% from state schools	90.6%	87.2%	88.8%
% projected to complete or transfer	91.7%	88%	84.8%
% neither gained award or transferred	7.1%	9.7%	12.3%
% no longer in HE following year of entry	3.9%	6.2%	7.9%
Graduate level employment within 6 months of graduation	82%	n/a	70%

HESA PI data 2009/10

Aston combines close and important links to the local community (47% of students are from the West Midlands region, including 23% from Birmingham) with a growing international reputation (25% students from outside the EU). Over 90% of home students starting full-time first-degree courses at Aston in 2009/10 came from state schools, with over 37% from the four lowest socio-economic groups. Over 45% of our current students receive a maintenance grant, with around 34% on full grants. At the same time the University has a strong retention record, 96.1% of entrants still in Higher Education following their year of entry, and an excellent employment record, 82% of employed graduates entering "graduate level employment" within six months of graduation.

Our agreement encompasses

- Accessible Excellence
- Outreach and Widening Participation
- Retention and Progression
- Placements and Employability

Our milestones are arranged around these four pillars. (See Table 5a in Annex B). We aim to maintain our reputation for widening participation in an increasingly competitive HE arena, whilst strengthening our entrance standards and enhancing further the quality and vocational relevance of programmes. We will invest further in improving the retention, degree achievement and graduate employment success of our students beyond their current high levels.

ACCESS AGREEMENT 2012/13: COMPONENT ELEMENTS

Aston pioneered the four year placement degree programme over 40 years ago and remains the leader in this type of degree programme. A placement year enables Aston students to spend the third year of their course off campus, working with an employer. Placement programmes make

Aston graduates highly employable – indeed around 35% of our students are offered graduate positions with their placement companies - and underpin strong relationships with business, industry and the professions. Research carried out at Aston shows that sandwich programmes increase the employability of our graduates and improve their final degree grades (Driffield, Foster and Higson, 2011.) Our fee proposals seek to enhance further this position, and encourage more students to take placements, despite the increased length of the degree course and concerns over ‘student debt’.

1. Fee limits and fee income above £6,000

- i. We propose that our full-time Home/EU undergraduate tuition fee is £9,000 pa in 2012/13. This fee will rise by an inflation rate set by HEFCE/BIS.
- ii. Our four-year sandwich degree programmes enable students to spend the third year on industrial/professional placement. Our placement fee for Home/EU students will be set at £1,000 (a heavily subsidised rate compared to actual costs and the fee today) for those students entering in 2012/13 when they go on placement in 2014-15. This includes students who take a placement year or study exchange overseas if their year abroad is not part of the ERASMUS programme. The fee figure will rise by inflation for those students entering Aston University in 2013 and beyond.
- iii. According to HESA PI data released in July 2010, Aston has the highest percentage of students enrolled on sandwich courses, at just under 60%, of any UK university. This £1,000 tuition fee level is aimed at encouraging students to take the academically and vocationally beneficial option, irrespective of family income or social background.
- iv. Aston University is piloting an innovative range of integrated Masters programmes for 2012 entry where a year’s placement is combined with academic study (at a much more intensive level than is associated with the conventional placement year). This will enable Aston students on specific programmes to gain an MEng or MSc qualification in four years, whilst also gaining relevant professional experience. The tuition fee for the placement/study year on these courses will be £4,500 for those students undertaking this in 2014/15. This figure will rise by inflation for those students taking this option in 2015/16 and beyond.
- v. Home/EU students following full-time Foundation Degree programmes will be charged a fee of no more than £6,000 from 2012/13*. This fee will rise by an inflation rate set by HEFCE/BIS. (*If HEFCE funding is withdrawn from 2012/13 the fee for Band B programmes will have to rise to £7,100.)
- vi. Aston also wishes to support and encourage students to undertake EU ERASMUS year abroad programmes in future and would welcome further guidance on this issue from HEFCE and BIS as soon as possible so we can set our year abroad fees.
- vii. Aston University will publish details of any part time fees as and when guidance is published by HEFCE and OFFA.

2. Expenditure on additional access and retention measures

In 2012/13 Aston plans to invest 24% of its fee income above £6,000 into Aston University Scholarships, outreach, retention and employability. Tables 3a-d in Annex B show the projected additional income accruing from variable fees for the period 2010/11 to 2014/15 and the estimated amount allocated in the form of scholarships and support for academic activities, including improvements to facilities.

In 2012/13 this investment will take the form of:

- i. £2.5M in OFFA countable Scholarships and financial support, including significantly exceeding Aston’s NSP allocation. The University will increase its hardship funds to assist students who experience unforeseen financial difficulties during the course of their

- studies. Overall expenditure on outreach and retention activities rising to £2 million by 2015/16.
- ii. Modern foreign language tuition for all students entering Aston from 2012-13 at no additional cost to the student. This will be provided by Aston's University Wide Language Programme at a cost to Aston rising to £1.4M within 3 years. This offer is a central feature of Aston's Widening Participation strategy, ensuring that all students have access to critical language and cultural training, building up their employability and intercultural competence as part of our strategy to provide education for effective 'Global Citizenship'. National graduate employment and employer surveys show that those students who study a language or have language competence increase their chances of gaining graduate level employment (HEFCE, 2008). This is particularly important for our home students, a significant proportion of whom have not had the opportunity to study an additional language at school.

3. Additional Access Measures

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of Widening Participation at Aston are embedded within the University's Learning and Teaching and Employability Strategies. Priorities include:

- maintaining wide accessibility to our programmes and offering flexible delivery tailored to individual needs
- understanding student performance issues and implementation of improvement plans
- innovative curriculum design and delivery, to support the needs of a diverse student population and to develop essential, high level employability skills
- continuous improvement and enhancement of learner support systems to enable student achievement, including promoting mentoring
- extending targeted placement preparation support, and career management support and guidance
- enhancing student employability outcomes through: opportunities for entrepreneurship training and experience; promoting work-based learning opportunities; enhancing the value of placements; and employer and alumni engagement.

3.1 Outreach

- a. We will be undertaking the following targeted work, building on our current track record. Key targets for activities are listed in Table 5b of the Access Agreement document.
 - i. Each academic School will target key feeder schools and colleges to use successful role models from the student body and alumni to promote recruitment of pupils from widening participation backgrounds and those with excellent entry qualifications, focusing in particular on extending access to SIV and STEM subjects.
 - ii. Master classes and Student Conferences will continue to be a major part of our provision. Over 750 students from target schools and colleges will take part in 2012/13.
 - iii. Over 1,500 students in Year 7-11 will visit our campus for HE experience days in addition to those at post 16, again from target schools and colleges.
 - iv. We will appoint an Information, Advice and Guidance Schools Liaison Officer in 2012/13 to work with target schools across the UK (although maintaining a regional focus) to strengthen or complement other advice and guidance support. This will focus on Year 8-12 students including year 9 options and GCSE choices.
 - v. We will expand the number of student mentors working in targeted regional schools and colleges, both in person and via e-mentoring, beyond the numbers planned as part of the Collaborative Outreach Activities outlined below. A minimum of 55 student mentors will

- be working with up to 300 learners by 2013/14. This is in addition to more than 60 volunteer student tutors and e-mentors.
- vi. We will make the key elements of study skills and online revision support available to students who apply to Aston through UCAS. Applicants will be enabled and encouraged to interact with the University through a pre-entry student Portal, complementing the existing MAP (My Aston Portal) system. This support will be specifically targeted to students from the lower socio-economic groups and from schools/colleges whose performance is below the UK average at GCSE and A level.
 - vii. The Aston University Engineering Academy (a University Technical College), which opens in September 2012, will provide a crucial pipeline from local schools in low participation areas to degrees and apprenticeships in engineering.
 - viii. Aston organised the annual Birmingham UCAS HE Guidance Convention from 1995 to 2007, in 2009 and 2011, when over 12,000 Year 12 students and their advisers attended. We will bid to UCAS to host and part-fund this annual event again in 2013. This event is open to all West Midlands schools and colleges, the majority of which have significant percentages of students from the four lowest socio-economic groups.
 - ix. There will be further development of the regional Routes into Languages programme (led from Aston), aimed at promoting languages in schools.
 - x. Additional STEM Ambassadors will be recruited to encourage the study of maths, science and engineering in schools. The number will rise to 30 by 2013/14.
 - xi. We will continue to provide outreach to the very young (and their parents) to ensure they recognise university as part of their future. Activities will include our involvement in the Children's University, Aston Olympics, staff and student volunteering in primary and junior schools and out of school clubs.
 - xii. We will develop programmes (eg study skills and e-mentoring) which will assist applicants to prepare for study and life at University.
 - xiii. We intend to monitor closely our efforts to maintain and enhance participation from under-represented groups and to this end we will be employing a member of staff in the Planning and Management Information Team to provide information and support to our monitoring and research efforts in this area.

b. Collaborative Outreach Activities

Aston University has formed a collaborative partnership with the University of Birmingham, University College Birmingham and Birmingham City University to take forward the legacy of the Birmingham and Solihull AimHigher (AH) partnership. Established in 2004, that partnership of five HEIs, two local authorities and 118 local schools, academies and FE/6th form colleges in Birmingham and Solihull, has been very successful in delivering an extensive provision of widening access activities, including collaborative provision of mentoring, masterclass, summer schools and advice to schools.

The new partnership will take forward this work in collaboration with schools, focusing upon pre-16 education, within a new organisational model which draws upon the experience and successful initiatives of the AH partnership. Aston University will jointly fund the partnership's work with a contribution of £25,000 in 2011/12 and £35,000 in 2012/13 and is playing a significant role in its governance and management. Partnership activities will complement Aston's own extensive programme of widening participation and fair access measures outlined elsewhere in this agreement.

c. Admissions Policy and 'Accessible Excellence'

Aston's Admissions Policy aims to be fair and transparent and to enable the University to meet (and to exceed) both the widening participation and state school benchmarks at the same time as maintaining high entry standards. This underpins our reputation for 'Accessible Excellence'.

As outlined in Table 1, above, Aston consistently exceeds benchmarks on state school entry, socio-economic groups and non-continuation, despite a growing popularity with UCAS applicants and increasing competition for places. Average UCAS tariff points have increased from 313 points in 2002 to over 370 in 2009 (Source: Complete University Guide 2011/2012).

3.2 Student Retention, Employability and Success

- i. Aston's retention and employability record remains amongst the best in the country, but we are committed to improving this, recognising that with a step change in the level of loans to be repaid, failing to complete a degree becomes an even greater worry for students and families than it is today. We are setting ourselves ambitious stretch targets for retention and employability (see Table 5a), because we see this as the best way to build on Aston's expertise in these areas and provide students, particularly from under-represented groups, with a strong start in their professional life.
- ii. From 2012/13 Aston is committed to offering further specific support for student retention by appointing additional teaching and academic support staff in our academic Schools. This will supplement existing academic personal tutors, and student engagement initiatives to identify where students need additional support in their academic and personal lives.
- iii. We will continue to ensure that all new staff undertake the HE Academy-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice, and raise the number of academic staff who are Associates or Fellows of the HE Academy beyond the current 40% level (already above the national average).
- iv. We will increase the level of support in the Maths Drop-In Centre (part of the Learning Development Centre) by appointing student maths mentors following the model of our highly successful writing mentors and IT programming support.
- v. Aston has over 1,000 active student peer mentors working with other Aston students in earlier years. We will increase this number to at least 1,500 in the next two years and continue to offer mentoring to all undergraduates.
- vi. We will roll out our innovative Engineering CDIO interactive learning programme and our intercultural communication workshops across all four academic Schools.
- vii. We will invest up to £1.4M in the next three years to offer free modern foreign languages tuition to all first year students.
- viii. Our NSP package seeks to increase the number of students who live in university managed accommodation on campus. This will help to ensure that more of our students living away from home would benefit from personal and social support on campus via our Residence Tutors and other pastoral services, which our internal research shows helps to maximise their performance (Arya and Smith, 2004).
- ix. Aston has reorganised its Placements, Careers and Employability activities to enable an increase in the number of students taking a period of work experience integrated into their degree, to embed employability and life skills more effectively into the curriculum, and to contribute to the delivery of the increased graduate employability targets set out in Table 5a.
- x. Our Students' Guild Job Shop offered over 4,000 term time job opportunities in 2010/11. The Job Shop vets the opportunities it offers to ensure both the nature of the work and the number of hours involved make it suitable to take on alongside full-time study, and that the student will gain employability skills from the experience. This service will continue to be funded by the University beyond 2012.

3.3 Aston Scholarships and other financial support for students

a. National Scholarship Programme (NSP)

Aston University proposes to offer 166 Scholarships in 2012/13 as part of the National Scholarship Programme (NSP) with Aston funding 88 scholarships in addition to the allocation of 78 scholarships from the Government.

Aston's NSP offer will be as follows:

- £3,000 tuition fee waiver in year one
- £1,000 tuition fee waiver in 2014/15 for the Aston sandwich placement year. As already explained, Aston is planning to charge a fee for the placement year of £1,000. Students on Optometry or Pharmacy (where a pre-registration year replaces the placement year), or MEng/MSc courses with an integrated placement study year will be given a £1,000 tuition fee waiver in year three.

Recipients must be:

- English domiciled students with residual household incomes of up to £14,500, claiming the maintenance grant (including mature students and care leavers, as assessed by Student Finance England through HEBSS) and
- Opting to live away from the family home on campus in year one.

The Aston NSP is particularly designed to support students who feel that they cannot afford to attend a University away from their home. It is only available to students who live in University managed campus residences for the duration of their first year (and have paid residences fees for the full year). The scheme will also support care leavers who live in University accommodation. The University will also prioritise first year students in allocating places within the Stafford Tower residences which has the lowest fees of all Aston's residences.

We have had to focus the scholarships on students who live away from home because of the relatively small number of scholarships we have in relation to the socio-economic mix of our students. Over 34% of current Aston first year undergraduate students are assessed as having a family income of up to £18,000, whilst the NSP provision will only be available for 9.6% of first year undergraduates. The section below describes our approach to supporting other students in this low income category.

Other Aston Scholarships

b. Aston Advantage Scholarships

As indicated above, the National Scholarship provision will only cover just under a third of the number of Aston students from backgrounds with family incomes up to £18,000. For this reason in 2012/13 we are introducing an Aston Advantage Scholarship of up to £2,000 for all other first year Home/EU students paying full deferred variable tuition fees with household incomes of up to £18,000.

These Aston Advantage Scholarships will take the form of :

- £1,000 tuition fee waiver from the first year fee of £9,000
- £1,000 fee waiver in 2014/15 for the Aston sandwich placement year. Students who undertake the placement year will be qualified for this fee waiver. Students on Optometry or Pharmacy (where a pre-registration year replaces the placement year), or MEng/MSc courses with an integrated placement study year will be given a £1,000 tuition fee waiver in year three.

c. Aston Progression Scholarships

For 2012/13 the University will offer an Aston Progression Scholarship of £500 pa to all Home/EU students paying deferred variable tuition fees who are in receipt of full or partial state support – i.e. with household income of up to £42,000. This support will be guaranteed in each year of study where a tuition fee of £9,000 is charged, subject to satisfactory academic performance. Students who receive National Scholarship Programme support and Aston Advantage Scholarships in year one will receive this further support via an Aston Progression Scholarship in subsequent years. Based on historical access trends it is anticipated that over 45% of students paying deferred variable tuition fees at Aston will be entitled to these Aston Scholarships or the National Scholarship Programme.

Aston Progression Scholarships will provide:

- £500 tuition fee waiver in each year of study where a tuition fee for £9,000 is charged.

Aston Scholarships have been structured in this way for the following reasons.

- The current Government plans for interest charges on fee and maintenance loans are for RPI plus 3% while students are studying, with possible variable levels of interest after graduation. A £500 Aston fee waiver would effectively mean that Home/EU students' fee loans would not increase in interest each year based on a typical interest rate of just over 5% if fees are set at £9,000 (£1,000 for the placement year). In a typical financial period this would mean that on graduation students would not "owe" more than they originally borrowed in fee loans after three or four years of study at Aston.

Students will be assessed for eligibility through the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) which is administered by the Student Loans Company.

d. Aston Placement Scholarships

All Home/EU students who undertake an unpaid sandwich work or study placement year in the UK or overseas will receive an additional tuition fee waiver of £1,000. Those in receipt of a placement fee reduction via the Aston NSP or Aston Advantage Scholarships will not be entitled to an Aston Placement Scholarship as well. (This is subject to confirmation by the Government on arrangements for ERASMUS students.) Again this is intended to encourage more Aston students to take the placement option which we know is beneficial to their success as graduates.

e. Aston Excellence Scholarships

All Home/EU students entering Aston in 2012/13 with at least AAB grades at 'A' Level or equivalent* will be entitled to Aston Excellence Scholarships. Entrants in receipt of NSP, Aston Advantage Scholarships and Aston Progression Scholarships will also be entitled to receive Aston Excellence Scholarships if they have gained at least AAB grades or equivalent. This will further promote the principle of accessible excellence. We anticipate that 21% of students from widening participation backgrounds will benefit from Aston Excellence Scholarships IN ADDITION to other forms of Aston scholarship support.

Aston's Excellence Scholarships will be as follows:

- £1,000 tuition fee waiver in each year of study where a tuition fee for £9,000 is charged (normally amounting to £3,000 for a standard 4 year sandwich programme)
- £1,000 tuition fee waiver in 2014/15 for the Aston sandwich placement year. As already explained, Aston is planning to charge a fee for the placement year of £1,000. Students on Optometry or Pharmacy (where a pre-registration year replaces the placement year), or

MEng/MSc courses with an integrated placement study year will be given a £1,000 tuition fee waiver.

** AAB equivalence will be assessed in accordance with the HEFCE definition used in its student number control methodology.*

4. Targets and Milestones

Our Targets and Milestones are set out in Table 5 of Annex B.

We are committing to OFFA targets which maintain our current access levels whilst improving retention and employability.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Key targets are already in place for the main strategic themes of Aston's Corporate Plan (ie teaching and learning, research, and business/community engagement). The University's Executive and Council meetings currently monitor a range of indicators, including widening participation, retention/continuation rates, degree attainment, employability, and student satisfaction levels. The detailed monitoring and analysis of widening participation activity is carried out across two University Committees: Business and Community Engagement, and Learning and Teaching. The 'OFFA Targets' in this agreement will become those used for Executive and Council KPIs. The stretch targets will be used for individual and departmental objectives.

Aston has invested in evaluation and reflection on the impact of all its key initiatives, including outreach, retention and student success:

- Surveys across the whole student life cycle are carried out by our market research team, and lead to action plans to address issues
- our Student Experience Evaluation Officer reviews the impact of our services on students in order to implement improvements
- the Planning Office will draw together all the monitoring of this Access Agreement.
- as referenced throughout the text of this Agreement, Aston academic staff will continue to carry out research on the impact of our activities on student achievement. This research will inform the further development of our approach
- the regular meetings between the Director of Staff and Student Services, the Vice-Chancellor, and Aston Student Guild Officers, and reports from Guild Senate, will provide rapid feedback on student concerns and any problems with implementation of the new support schemes
- in addition, the Birmingham and Solihull Higher Education Progression Partnership is developing a comprehensive impact and evaluation plan which will monitor student engagement in partnership activities, track the progression of those learners with whom the partnership works most closely, evaluate the overall effectiveness of the partnership activity and disseminate good practice. Evaluation will include both quantitative and qualitative measures and will provide evidence to partner HEIs and schools engaged in the programme.

6. Provision of information to students

Aston has arranged its provision of information and guidance to students in two key areas:

a. Pre-Arrival

- i. Applicants are informed of the nature and level of tuition fees, bursaries and awards via the prospectus, the University website and special promotional leaflets. Finance talks feature as part of a programme of secondary school visits and HE guidance evenings for parents in schools. The University also provides pre-entry information and guidance on financial matters through Open Days and events for parents and teachers on the Aston campus.
- ii. For entry in 2012 and beyond the University will expand the amount of printed information about scholarships, fees and bursaries to ensure that key messages are read by potential students and disseminated to their parents, advisers and carers.
- iii. The University has developed a web and printed Guide for Parents which includes information on financial matters, and will be updated in the light of 2012 entry changes as and when they are formally confirmed: www.aston.ac.uk/parents.
- iv. Pre-entry financial guidance is provided by the Advice & Representation Centre (ARC) in the Students' Guild and by University recruitment staff.
- v. Aston is committed to the national KIS initiative. This will be linked in to the University's new application portal which will allow better communication with students, pre-application and pre-arrival. We are investing in this area in from 2011/12 to increase welfare advice and guidance.

b. Post-Arrival

- i. The Hub (our one-stop student advice point) and the ARC provide face-to-face financial, and other, advice and guidance to all Aston students throughout the year, including advice on the Aston Scholarship and Bursary schemes.
- ii. The Financial Assistance Unit in the Hub oversees the provision of additional financial assistance for students in the form of funds, trusts and bursaries, all of which are targeted and allocated on the basis of need.
- iii. Students are informed at enrolment and re-enrolment of their position in relation to the information on their HEBSS record concerning their eligibility for Aston Bursaries and Scholarships
- iv. The student portal (MAP) is used as means to communicate with students about their entitlements during the on-line enrolment and re-enrolment processes. Messages are sent to all potentially eligible students individually reminding them of their entitlement and informing them of any problems with their HEBSS records which might affect the payment of their Bursaries or Scholarships.
- v. The University has invested in a co-ordinator for the Students' Job Shop and in research into the level and impact of debt and part-time work upon Aston University students. Information generated from these sources will be used to improve our support and advice to students.

Concluding remarks

We look forward to discussing the content of this agreement with OFFA.

Aston University is strongly committed to delivery the activities and scholarships described in this plan. However, should the Government introduce major changes to funding allocations over the next four months, it may be necessary to review the overall level of University investment.

Finally, we would like to record our concerns about the way in which the National Scholarship Programme funds have been allocated. The allocation has a major impact on all students at universities with a high proportion of undergraduates from low income families. The system would seem to have been fairer if 'the funding followed the student', the principle the Government has adopted for the new fees system.

References

Revised 10 November 2011

Arya, R. and Smith, R. (2004), 'Living at Home: an investigation into the degree to which University facilities are used by students living off campus', Aston Widening Participation Working Group.

Driffield, N.L., Foster, C.S. and Higson, H.E. (2001), 'Placements and degree performance: do placements lead to better marks, or do better students choose placements?', Studies in HE (under review).

Gorman, P. (2011), 'Enhancing the Student Experience: Giving students a voice and asking the right questions', Learning and Teaching Committee, February 2011.

HEFCE, (2008), 'Graduates and their early careers'
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2008/08_39/#exec, [accessed on 21st January 2010].

Ingleby, A. (2009), 'Embedding Widening Participation', Learning and Teaching Committee, February 2009.

Table 5 - Milestones and targets

Table 5a - Statistical milestones and targets relating to your applicants, entrants or student body (e.g. HESA, UCAS or internal targets)

Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones/targets (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)
				2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
State School (HESA Table T1b)	To meet or outperform the benchmark for the % of students from state schools whilst maintaining entry quality	2009/10	90.6	90	90	90	90	90	92 Stretch Target. HESA Benchmark 87.2
NS-SEC (location adjusted) (HESA Table T1a)	To meet or outperform the benchmark for the % of students from Ns-SEC 4,5,6 &7 whilst maintaining entry quality	2009/10	37.2	35	35	35	35	35	38 Stretch Target. HESA Benchmark 30.6
LPN (location adjusted) (HESA Table T1a)	To meet or outperform the benchmark for the % of students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods whilst maintaining entry quality	2009/10	8.5	8.7	8.8	8.9	9	9.1	10 Stretch Target. HESA Benchmark 8.7
Non continuation: All (HESA Table T3a)	To meet or outperform the benchmark for non-continuation rates of all students	2009/10	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.4	3 Stretch Target. HESA Benchmark 6.2
Projected outcomes (HESA table T5)	To meet or outperform the benchmark for % of students projected to complete or transfer	2009/10	91.7	92	93	93	93	94	95 Stretch Target. HESA Benchmark 88.0
Other (please give details in the next column)	To meet or out perform benchmark for % of full-time graduates in employment (including further study)	2009/10	92.3	93	93	94	94	94	95 Stretch Target. HESE Benchmark 89.4
Other (please give details in the next column)	To increase percentage of employed graduates in graduate level employment	2009/10	81.7	82	83	84	85	85	87 Stretch target
Other (please give details in the next column)	To increase percent of eligible students who undertake a uk/overseas work placement or study period abroad	2009/10	59.9	65	65	65	70	75	80 Stretch target

Table 5b - Other milestones and targets

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

Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones/targets (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)
				2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	number of targeted learners accessing intensive residential activities on campus. Learners will be targeted by state school and from schools/colleges with 60% or more of students who live in disadvantaged IMD postcodes	2010-11	60	60	100	100	120	120	Some of this activity may be part of the HE Progression Partnership mentioned below under collaborative activity
Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	masterclasses and subject enrichment. Number of learners accessing masterclasses and subject enrichment activities. Learners will be targeted by state school and from schools/colleges with 60% or more of students who live in the most disadvantaged IMD postcodes	2010-11	700	700	750	1000	1000	1200	Activity is partly dependent on continued demand from Schools, Colleges, Academies and learners and use of Pupil Premium and other funding for cover, transport etc. Demand has been extremely high under the Aimhigher arrangements
Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	campus visits. Number of students visiting campus for general HE experience days and aspiration raising events. Learners will be targeted by state school and from schools/colleges with 60% or more of students who live in the most disadvantaged IMD postcodes	2010-11	1500	1500	1500	2000	2000	2000	Activity is partly dependent on continued demand from Schools, Colleges, Academies and learners and use of Pupil Premium and other funding for cover, transport etc. Demand has been extremely high under the Aimhigher arrangements

Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) in schools and colleges. Number of visits to schools and colleges where 60% or more of students are from IMD postcodes as above. These include parents evenings, Y9 options evenings, HE Guidance sessions. This is complement or replace lost funding and staffing in careers and connexions services.	2010-11	20	50	60	70	70	70	
Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	intensive mentoring in schools and colleges as part of the Birmingham and Solihull HE Progression Partnership. Number of mentors working (assume 5 learners/mentees per mentor). Mentees and Schools will be highly targeted as part of the HE Progression Partnership below	2010-11	50	25	25	25	25	25	Some of this activity will be part of the HE Progression Partnership mentioned below under collaborative activity. This figure may rise as and when more schools across the city contribute to the HE Progression Partnership. This figure is at present dependent on funding from Schools as part of Pupil premium or other sources. Please note this targets is for Aston Student Mentors and not learners.
Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Intensive mentoring in schools and colleges - Aston specific mentors funded by Aston or other sources. Targeted as above.	2010-11	0	20	30	30	30	30	This figure may become part of the collaborative partnership numbers if more schools contribute to HE Progression Partnership funding. This figure refers to Aston student mentors and not learners.
Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Student Tutoring and e-mentoring - less intensive volunteer tutors and mentors working in target schools and colleges on academic and aspiration support via the long established student tutoring scheme at Aston	2010-11	50	60	70	70	70	70	this figure includes activities such as after school clubs, STEM ambassadors, e-mentors. This figure refers to Aston Student Volunteers and not learner numbers. Learner numbers will vary according to the type of engagement and time of year.

Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in	Number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds engaged in intensive activity with collaborative partnership using a basket of indicators	2010/11	500	500	750	1000	1000	1000	Birmingham and Solihull HE Progression Partnership is 4 HEIs jointly working with Year 9, 10 and 11 learners in at least 10 local schools in raising awareness of HE progression and to extend fair access. This is a short-term and collective target (see below)
Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in	Proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the intensive activity target group on Level 3 programmes at age 17 is greater than local average for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, using a basket of indicators	2010/11	We await release Participation by Highest Level of Qualification Data for 2009 / 10 at Local Authority Level by DfE	NA	To be greater than local average for peer group (against a basket of indicators of disadvantage)	To be greater than local average for peer group (against a basket of indicators of disadvantage)	To be greater than local average for peer group (against a basket of indicators of disadvantage)	To be greater than local average for peer group (against a basket of indicators of disadvantage)	Birmingham and Solihull HE Progression Partnership is 4 HEIs jointly working with Year 9, 10 and 11 learners in at least 10 local schools in raising awareness of HE progression and to extend fair access. This is a medium-term and collective target as the intensive work cohort would not start to be at age 17 until 2013/14 (see above)
Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in	Proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in intensive activity target group applying for FT place in HE is greater than local average for YP from disadvantaged backgrounds, using a basket of indicators	2010/11	We await analysis of 2010 UCAS applicant and 2009 HESA entrant data to inform baselines and subsequent targets	NA	NA	To be greater than local average for peer group (against a basket of indicators of disadvantage)	To be greater than local average for peer group (against a basket of indicators of disadvantage)	To be greater than local average for peer group (against a basket of indicators of disadvantage)	Birmingham and Solihull HE Progression Partnership is 4 HEIs jointly working with Year 9, 10 and 11 learners in at least 10 local schools in raising awareness of HE progression and to extend fair access. This is a long-term and collective target as the intensive work cohort would not be expected to progress to HE until 2014/15 (see above)