



Lancaster University 2012-13 Access Agreement

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

Lancaster University intends to charge new Home-EU undergraduate degree entrants a flat fee of £9,000 for all degree-level courses in 2012-13. The estimated number of students who would be paying this fee up until 2015-16 is set out in table 1 of Annex B.

For 2013-14 onwards the University intends to apply annual inflationary increases in line with the amount set by the Government each year.

2. Expenditure on additional access measures

Assessment of Lancaster University's access and retention record

2006 to 2009

Lancaster's current OFFA Access Agreement identifies the following WP target groups:

- a) Students from NSSEC classes 4 – 7
- b) Students from state schools
- c) Minority ethnic students
- d) Mature students
- e) Disabled students

The University set itself the objective of maintaining the percentage of UK students recruited from state schools and achieving increases in the percentage of students recruited from the remaining target groups.

The measures set out in Lancaster's current Access Agreement include package of student financial support (which has been subject to various adjustments since 2006) and a range of new outreach activities directly funded from additional fee income. In 2009-10 £2,565k was spent on direct financial support for OFFA eligible students and £195k on outreach activities directly supported through additional fee income.

The University has also continued to support a range of pre-OFFA widening participation activities and was an active participant in the national Aim Higher programme.

Lancaster's 2009-10 WPSA monitoring return identified an estimated total expenditure of £5,976k on Widening Participation, of which £2,760k was OFFA eligible.

The following table and charts¹ (taken from an evaluation of Lancaster's WP data that was recently discussed by the Vice-Chancellor's senior advisory group) shows Lancaster's performance against the WP benchmarks included in our current Access Agreement.

WP indicators and benchmarks	2006 entry	2007 entry	2008 entry	2009 entry
Percentage from Socio Economic Groups 4 - 7	22.6%	23.5%	26.7%	23.5%
Access agreement milestone	20.0%	21.0%	22.0%	24.0%
Proportion of UK students from black and minority ethnic groups	5.3%	5.5%	6.4%	7.9%
Access agreement milestone	4.9%	5.4%	6.1%	7.0%
Percentage from state schools	90.3%	91.2%	89.2%	91.3%
Access agreement milestone	90.7%	90.7%	90.7%	90.7%
Mature students (21 or over on entry)	9.0%	7.7%	6.8%	7.4%
Access agreement milestone	6.8%	6.8%	7.0%	7.0%
Disabled students	7.3%	5.9%	5.3%	6.3%
Access agreement milestone	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%	7.2%

The data shows that the University has been largely successful in achieving the WP recruitment milestones set out in its current OFFA-approved Access Agreement.

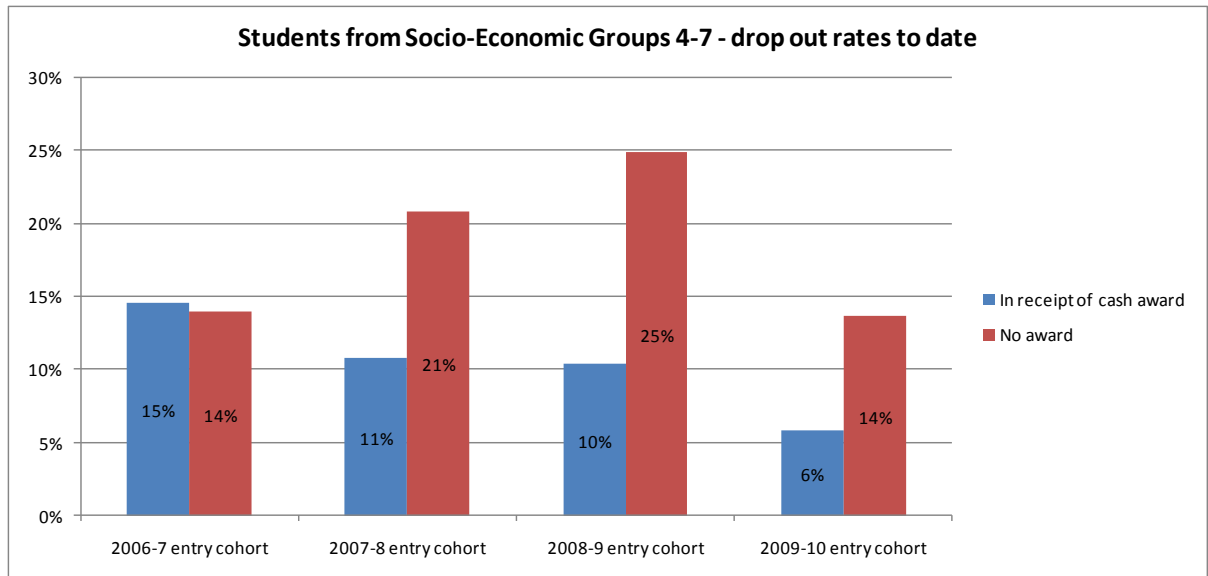
Research has also been carried out on the impact of the financial support package and whether this has had any effect on retention rates for students from the target Socio-Economic Group 4-7.²

The following table compares the completion rates to date by entry cohort for students in Socio-Economic Groups 4-7 with and without a financial award.

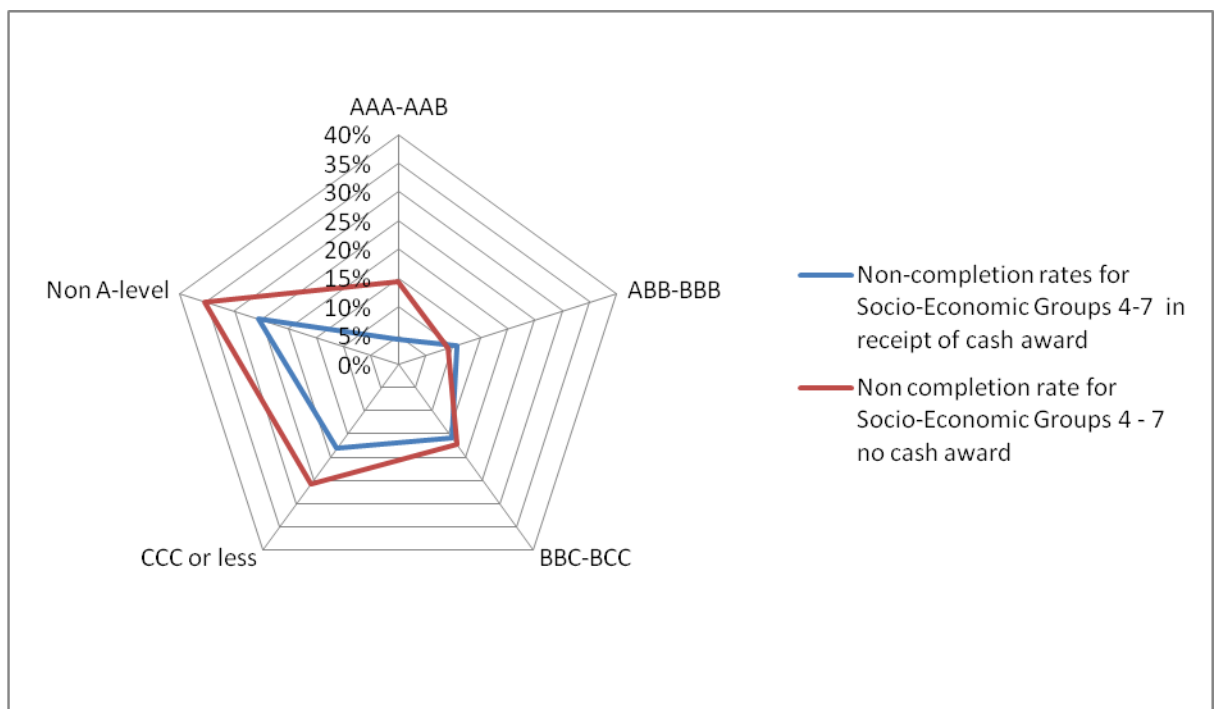
¹ Notes:

1. The figures for socio-economic groups 4-7 and students from state schools are taken from the annual HEFCE performance indicators.
2. Internal data was used to produce figures for the other measures.
3. The figures for disabled students include all students with a declared disability and not just those in receipt of the DSA.
4. The 2008-09 figure for recruitment from socio-economic groups 4-7 was affected by the change in the wording used by UCAS to ask for information about parental occupation.

² A significant proportion of students from this group were not eligible for financial support (either because they did not provide the required income data to the Student Loan Company or because their household income was above the threshold set), allowing useful comparisons to be made on the possible impact of the financial support packages provided.



Because other research has shown a strong correlation between entry grades and drop out rates, the following chart shows the same data broken down by entry grade bands:



The data shows that retention rates for students from the target socio-economic group 4-7 who received financial support in the form of a cash bursary (typically £1k per annum over a student's whole period of study) were significantly higher than for those not receiving financial support.

Current performance

The following table is derived from the latest available HEFCE PI data, which relates to the 2009-10 academic year. It shows Lancaster's performance under the main WP PIs against its HEFCE benchmarks and the sector as a whole. To provide further context it

also shows the overall performance under these indicators of the 94 and Russell Group institutions.

	Percentage from state schools or colleges (Young degree entrants)	Percentage from NS-SEC classes 4,5,6 & 7 (Young degree entrants)	Percentage from low participation neighbourhoods (Young degree entrants)	Percentage in receipt of DSA - all undergraduates	Percent no longer in HE after first year of study - all new first degree entrants	Percent no longer in HE after first year of study - young first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods
Lancaster	91.4	23.4	9.4	4.3	5.3	5.2
Lancaster benchmark	83.9	25.0	8.1	3.7	4.9	5.4
Sector	89.4	30.7	10.7	4.8	7.9	8.7
94 Group	81.3	21.8	6.6	4.4	5.3	5.6
Russell Group (excluding Oxbridge)	77.8	20.4	6.2	3.6	4.4	5.4
Oxbridge	56.8	10.8	3.0	2.8	1.2	2.8

The data shows that Lancaster is:

- significantly above its HEFCE benchmark for the recruitment of students from state schools and outperforming the sector
- slightly below its benchmark for the recruitment of students from NS-SEC groups 4-7 and significantly below the sector
- above its benchmark for recruitment from low participation neighbourhoods and close to the sector
- above its above its benchmark for recruitment of students in receipt of DSA and close to the sector
- significantly above its bench mark for the retention of students recruited from low-participation neighbourhoods and outperforming the sector

On this basis, we believe that overall we have an average proportion of under-represented students and propose to spend around 22.5 per cent of fee income above £6,000 per FTE on widening participation, as set out in table 3d, Annex B.

Proposed balance of expenditure across outreach, retention and financial support for students

Financial Support for Students

Because of the University’s success to date in achieving the majority of its targets for the recruitment of target WP group (in the context of a package of WP expenditure that has been strongly weighted towards student support), and the evidence that financial support has improved retention rates, it is proposed that for 2012-13 a significant proportion of the new additional fee income should be used to supplement Lancaster’s allocation under the National Scholarship Programme to ensure that all eligible students (i.e. English students with a declared household income of less than £25k) are able to receive the full award. On the basis of the current pattern of recruitment, we would expect around 600 students in each entry cohort to receive a NSP award.

The award will be made in students’ first year of study and will comprise:

- £1,000 – fee waiver
- £1,000 – accommodation discount
- £1,000 – cash bursary

We also believe that continuing financial support throughout the whole period of study is an important factor in helping maximise retention and that this would enhance the attractiveness of the NSP package for WP groups. It is therefore proposed to make an additional Lancaster award of £1k per annum to the same NSP eligible students over their remaining period of study after their first year.

This approach has been supported by Lancaster's Student Union who, in consultations with the University on the new Access Agreement, have stated their strong belief that students from the WP target groups, especially those from low-income families, are best assisted by direct financial support at the time of their studies.

The University also proposes to introduce a revised merit-based scholarship scheme in which students entering with A-level grades of A*AA (or the equivalent) will receive a cash award of £1k per annum (the continuation of which will be conditional on their subsequent academic performance). It is estimated that around 40% percent of the students receiving this award be in the OFFA eligible groups.

Our estimate of the cost of financial support for students is set out in Annex B (tables 3a and 3b). As can be seen, this still allows a significant increase in expenditure on Outreach and Retention in 2012-13 with a more substantial projected phased increase over the period to 2015-16.

Outreach

As set out in table 3c in Annex B, it is proposed that annual expenditure on Outreach should be increased from the current level of £250k per annum to £427k in 2012-12. Current projections for future expenditure on Outreach (also shown in table 3c) are for this to increase on a phased basis reach an annual spend of £1,440k by 2015-16.

The University believes that the evidence suggests that its current approach to widening participation has been generally successful and it therefore proposes to build upon its existing WP strategy and portfolio of Outreach activities.

Up to and including 2009-10, a significant proportion of the University's widening participation activity took place in the University's Department of Continuing Education. However, because of the removal of HEFCE T funding for ELQ students had a major detrimental impact on the financial viability of the Department's core part-time course provision, the University took the decision to close the department with effect from 1st August 2010, and to relocate WP activities previous run from within the Department to the University's UK Recruitment Office. A decision was also taken to focus more strongly on WP activities aimed at students in the school years 10 to 13 and the recruitment of the WP target groups to Lancaster.

The main focus of the University's Outreach activities is direct work with regional schools to raise awareness amongst under-represented groups about the benefits of Higher Education and the opportunities for study at Lancaster. The target audience is students from the WP target groups in years 5-13 and continuing activities will include day visits, master classes, on-campus residential and in-school activities.

Possible new activities currently being considered for implementation by 2012-13 include an *Outreach Partnership Schools Programme*, which would aim to establish stronger links with around 20 regional schools who have higher than average numbers of students from the WP target groups, and a new *Lancaster University Student Mentoring Scheme* that would aim to employ around 40 LU students to run peer to peer mentoring in up to 20 regional schools.

The University will also continue to provide financial support for WP-related activities undertaken by its highly successful student volunteering unit, *Involve* (formally called LUVU). This is managed through Lancaster University Students Union and provides opportunities for students to undertake volunteer work in local schools and communities. During 2009-10 *Involve* enabled 430 students to undertake volunteer work in 73 schools and colleges across the North West, engaging with over 6000 children and young people.

Operational targets for Outreach work undertaken with schools and pupils for the period up until 2016-17 (based on current expenditure assumptions) are set out in table 5b in Annex B.

Student Retention

As set out in Annex B, the University proposes to invest £284k from its additional fee income in new retention activities aimed at helping students from the target WP groups in 2012-13, and it is currently projected that annual spend on WP retention will be increased on a phased basis to £960k by 2015-16.

Because of the short timescale available for producing this Access Agreement, discussions on possible new retention activities are inevitably at a relatively early stage. However, it is expected that new retention activities will include the following.

- the provision of paid employment opportunities for students from the WP target groups that will help enhance their chances of progression to high level graduate employment
- targeted academic support for students from WP groups with non-standard entry qualifications, particularly during their first year of study³
- summer schools targeted at WP groups
- new internship opportunities targeted at WP groups

Full proposals for retention activities will be developed during the 2011-12 academic year for implementation in 2012-13. These will be publicised to prospective students through the University's web site and other media.

³ An evaluation of student data has shown that students in this group are at a significantly higher risk of failing to complete their studies than standard A-level entrants.

3. Targets and milestones

We believe that there are clear advantages to basing the University's WP targets on the annual HEFCE WP performance indicators, namely:

- they reflect national priorities for the recruitment of groups currently under-represented in Higher Education
- they provide a reliable and independent source of evidence regarding the University's progress in widening access
- they enable effective benchmarking to be carried out against the H.E. sector as a whole and/or against specific institutions or groups of institutions

The main disadvantage of using them is the time lag between actual recruitment and the compilation and release of the PIs. For this reason, although the University will set its targets and measure its success in achieving them by using the HEFCE PIs, it will also (wherever possible) produce interim figures using its own internal data, which will be updated and finalised once the relevant HEFCE PIs are released. This will enable monitoring and evaluation to be carried out in a timely fashion, and help inform possible refinements or changes to WP activities on the basis of up-to-date evidence regarding their effectiveness.

The proposed measures to be used from the HEFE WP PIs are:

- Percentage young degree entrants recruited from state schools or colleges
- Percentage young degree entrants recruited from NS-SEC classes 4,5,6 & 7
- Percentage young degree entrants recruited from low participation neighbourhoods
- Percent young first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods no longer in HE after first year of study

The baseline figures will be the University's performance in the most recently released PIs (which relate to the 2009-10 academic year). The proposed milestones for the period to 2015-16 are set out in Annex B. For those measures where we are already performing strongly, such as state school recruitment, the target will be to maintain our current performance; for those measures where our current performance is less strong we will aim to improve both our absolute performance and our performance against HEFCE benchmarks.

4. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Widening participation policy is the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor who reports to the Vice-Chancellor through the senior management team.

The University will closely monitor all the available evidence on the success of the measures set out in this Access Agreement and its progress towards achieving its WP targets and milestone. The monitoring and evaluation process will be co-ordinated by the Planning Support Unit (which is based in the Vice-Chancellor's Office) in close co-operation with the UK Recruitment Office (based in the Division of Marketing and

External Linkages), which has primary responsibility for the delivery of the University's Outreach activities that are funded through additional fee income, and in consultation with other groups in the university with an involvement or interest in WP.

A wide range of data will be collected and analysed, including:

- applications data (e.g. number of applications from WP target groups, number of applications from target/partner schools, offers made, conversion rates, final acceptance rates etc.)
- data on outreach and retention activities (schools visited, events held, pupils from WP groups reached, students from WP groups given employment opportunities etc.)
- student registrations (actual recruitment of students from WP groups, recruitment from target schools, provision performance against HEFCE WP PIs etc.)
- student performance (dropout rates, in-year performance monitoring, final degree classifications etc.)
- graduate outcomes (employment rates, proportion of WP groups in graduate level employment etc.)

We already actively consult with the Student Union on all aspects of widening participation, including the development of the proposals contained in this Access Agreement, and they have made valuable contributions. We will continue this practice when monitoring and evaluating our WP success and considering any possible changes to related programmes and activities.

Biannual reports on the University's widening participation activities and the progress made towards achieving the objectives set out in this Access Agreement will be made to the Vice-Chancellor's senior advisory group (UMAG), who will take an overview of the University's WP strategy and consider recommendations for possible changes to this in the light of the evidence contained in the reports.

5. Provision of information to prospective students.

The University will continue to provide comprehensive and clear information on the financial support available for both prospective and current students through its web site and other media (including hard copy publications such as the University Prospectus, subject to the limitations caused by print deadlines).

We will also work with and through Lancaster's Student Union to help ensure that all relevant information reaches students.

It is expected that a range of additional information will also be available to prospective students through the planned national implementation of the Key Information Set initiative, including comprehensive data on graduate employment outcomes.

We are fully committed to providing on a timely basis any information required by UCAS and the SLC to populate their applicant-facing web services.

