



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

THE LSE ACCESS AGREEMENT FOR 2012 ENTRY

The LSE Access Agreement for 2012 entry

1 Background

LSE is committed to widen access to higher education in general and to LSE in particular. 'Engagement' remains one of the strategic priorities of our five-year Strategic Plan and widening participation is one of the key tenets of our engagement policy.

LSE has been involved in widening participation and access initiatives since 1998. Through our schemes we aim to raise the aspirations of school and sixth form students and also to improve the attainment of students so that they are better equipped to apply for selective institutions, such as LSE. Details of our existing WP portfolio can be found on our website at <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/informationForTeachersAndSchools/pdf/WideningParticipationBrochure2010.pdf>

Since we wrote our first Access Agreement for 2006 entry, the School has made steady progress against its HESA benchmarks.

LSE performance against HESA benchmarks, 2005-2009 entry

Year	State school		Low socio-economic background		Low participation neighbourhood	
	PI	Benchmark	PI	Benchmark	PI	Benchmark
2005	59%	76%	17.5%	19.4%	7.8%	9.1%
2006	65.9%	77.4%	18.2%	20.4%	4.1%	6.0%
2007	66.2%	78.3%	14.9%	19.8%	2.3%	6.2%
2008	70.7%	72.5%	18.7%	19.2%	4.5%	5.0%
2009	70.8%	73.1%	20.7%	18.1%	4.7%	5.3%

As a small, specialist social science institution (our UK/EU intake is 782 students per year) we face specific challenges relating to the suitability of A level choices and also demographic variations in the choice of university programmes which other multi-faculty institutions may not encounter. However, we are pleased with the progress made towards our benchmarks for state school, low socio-economic and low participation neighbourhood students. We aim to build upon the success of recent years, by reaching more pre-university students from a wider cross section of society and continuing to recruit students from these under-represented groups to LSE.

2 Tuition fees in 2012

We plan to charge new UK/EU undergraduate students beginning their course in 2012 a tuition fee of £8,500 per year. We will apply annual increases to the fee in line with inflation. This fee will be applied across all of our undergraduate programmes. Current students who started their undergraduate programme at LSE before 2012 will continue on the 'old system' of tuition fees.

A small number of our undergraduate students (around 10 per year) take part in a year abroad scheme with our partner institution, Sciences Po in Paris. This scheme attracts Erasmus funding. We will charge students taking part in the exchange scheme from 2013 onwards a tuition fee of £4,250 for their year abroad, whether they are UK, EU or Overseas fee status students. If the Erasmus scheme funding arrangements continue in their present form then UK students who are eligible for a Tuition Fee Loan will have these fees waived. The earliest that students studying under the new fees regime would take part in the exchange scheme would be 2013. Further details will be published when more information is made available about the position of Erasmus funding.

Our UK and EU intake target is 782 students per year in 2012, 2013 and 2014. We therefore expect to enrol 2346 UK and EU students in steady state in 2014-15.

Projected fee income and allocation for access in 2014-15

	2014 - 2015
<i>Additional fee income (income over £6K)</i>	<i>£5,865,000</i>
Budget allocated for UK bursaries	£1,944,000
Budget allocated to NSP match-funding	£187,500
Budget allocated for WP and retention measures	£665,000
Total LSE spend on access and retention	£2,796,500
Proportion of additional fee income	47.7%

3 Access measures for 2012 entry

Through the current balance of widening participation and bursary expenditure we have seen broad success in generating applications and securing acceptances from students from traditionally under-represented groups at LSE, as can be seen from the HESA performance table in section 1 opposite.

While we acknowledge that recent research indicates that the availability of bursaries does not influence students' university choices to any great extent, we remain concerned about the impact of higher fees (ie. above £6,000 per year) on traditionally under-represented groups.

We will devote some additional income to new pre-entry WP activity, admissions and on-course support work. However, we will continue to channel the majority of additional fee income, in steady state, into bursaries for students from under-represented groups. We will rationalise the existing LSE bursary scheme which is seen as being overly complex and limit eligibility to those on a full or partial grant (or equivalent household income bands for EU students). We plan to make our bursary scheme available for students from low-income backgrounds in the EU. We appreciate that EU students will not be counted for OFFA purposes but we think it is fair that, as EU students will be contributing to the additional fee income of the School, that they should also have access to some of the bursary and fee waiver options available to their UK counterparts.

Historically, a number of our WP activities have been funded by external bodies, organisations and alumni of the School. Currently, we receive around £240,000 per year from external sources to help fund our WP and access schemes. These income streams are due to end in the next three years but we plan to continue our efforts to secure further external funding to augment the School's own contribution to widening participation. We welcome the opportunity to have this contribution recognised in our Access Agreement.

4 Outreach and widening participation

Existing and new WP activities

Our existing WP portfolio sees us engage with around 1600 students per year from primary level to year 13. An overview of our existing provision, together with our new post-2012 activities and targets, is presented below.

Overview of existing and new WP activities at LSE

Age group (school year)	Existing activity	New activity
Pre 14 (Years 6 to 8)	Moving On Student tutoring Student mentoring Black Achievement Conference	Transition programme Introduction to the Social Sciences
14 – 16 (Years 9 to 11)	Student tutoring Student mentoring Summer School Student Shadowing	Transition programme Easter School Interactive social science workshops
16 – 18 (Years 12 to 13)	Student tutoring Student mentoring Pathways to Law LSE CHOICE Politics Conference Student Shadowing	Transition programme
Advisers/teachers/schools	Advising the Advisers Talks and visits to state schools Close school links	Targeted admissions information and feedback for low-performing schools

From 2012, our pre-entry WP activities and programmes will form a progression framework for young learners. Eligible students will be encouraged (via their schools) to engage with LSE through consecutive activities from Year 6 onwards. All of these programmes can also be accessed as ‘stand-alone’ schemes but the maximum benefit will be derived by students who use the framework to develop and build their aspirations and attainment over time.

We will develop and deliver five new programmes from 2012 onwards. These are:

- Transition programme – this series of one day events for students from Year 7 to Year 13 is designed to raise aspirations and develop skills to raise attainment throughout their school career.
- Introduction to the Social Sciences – this one day event for Year 8 pupils introduces them to the social sciences, helps them explore their academic interests and consider how these can open up a range of possibilities for the future.
- Easter School – this three day event for Year 9 pupils, which takes place before GCSE choices are made, provides a taste of university life through focusing on two or three social science subjects.
- Student mentoring – although we have been running student mentoring in schools for several years, we will be rolling this out to students in the younger pre-14 age group for the first time.
- Interactive social science workshops in schools – led by the SU at LSE and supported by the WP team, existing LSE students run interactive social science workshops in schools for students from year 9 to 11. The objective of the scheme is to raise awareness of the social sciences and of the diversity of experience available at LSE and similar HEIs.

National research shows that it is important to continue working with students from younger age groups. Take-up and performance at GCSE is key to progressing into higher education hence our development of new schemes to reach out to student in years 7 and 8, to provide guidance on GCSE choices and support them in their GCSE studies. We propose to retain our existing programmes which work with students in years 6 and 8 and consolidate this activity with our new initiatives ‘Transition’ and ‘Introduction to the Social Sciences’. Through these schemes we aim to develop a deeper relationship with our target groups through sustained interventions which require them to come onto a university campus.

In addition to the new initiatives outlined above, we will also revise some of our existing WP portfolio in light of evaluation and feedback.

- We will review the curriculum and content of LSECHOICE and Pathways to Law to make them a more suitable preparation for study at LSE. As a result of these changes, we aim to recruit more students from these schemes to LSE.
- We will expand the numbers attending the Advising the Advisers sessions to reach out to more schools.
- We will be altering the year group focus of some of our existing activities (eg. the Black Achievement Conference) in light of evaluation carried out in the past two years.

We work closely with UCL and the College of Law over the content and delivery of the Pathways to Law programme. This includes joint promotion and admissions for the scheme, as well as joint delivery of some sessions. We also liaise with the other HE partners delivering Pathways to Law around the country and all Pathways students come together at Warwick University once a year on a collaborative summer school.

The Pathways to Law programme has input from the College of Law and law firms in London. All students on the programme undertake a 3 to 5 day work placement at one of the country's leading law firms. One of the main principles underpinning the scheme is to aid social mobility.

With regard to expanding our collaborative work, we are exploring the possibility of joining the new pan-London collaboration Access HE, the successor to Aimhigher in the capital.

Expenditure on existing and new WP activities

Currently, LSE funds its WP portfolio from a combination of additional fee income and external funding (eg. funding from alumni, from the Sutton Trust and the College of Law). From 2012 onwards, we aim to increase the amount of additional fee income devoted to WP activities but will continue to seek support and sponsorship wherever possible.

Pre- and post-2012 expenditure on WP at LSE

Pre-2012 expenditure on WP (steady state)		Post-2012 projected expenditure on WP (steady state)	
<i>Additional LSE fee income</i>	<i>External funding</i>	<i>Additional LSE fee income</i>	<i>External funding</i>
<i>£240,000</i>	<i>£240,000</i>	<i>£440,000</i>	<i>£240,000</i>
Total spend = £480,000		Total projected spend = £680,000	

Target groups for outreach and widening participation

We will continue to target students from London state schools for participation in our WP activities.

In particular, priority will be given to:

- students from low performing state schools
- students who are in receipt of/qualify for free school meals
- students who live in low participation neighbourhoods
- students in Local Authority Care
- students from under-represented ethnic groups
- students with parents with no experience of higher education

We do not explicitly target disabled students. However, support for disabled students is embedded within our activities. We do not believe that students should disclose a disability if they do not want to at the point of application to our WP programmes. Instead, we will make it clear through our literature and contact with the schools that disabled students are encouraged to participate in our schemes and all reasonable support will be offered to these students once they have enrolled. Once a student has been accepted onto one of our WP schemes we then ask students to disclose what, if any, extra support they might need. We feel that this is a more inclusive approach to disability.

Use of contextual data at admissions

We currently use contextual data in our undergraduate admissions process, in particular assessing the applicants' GCSE performance in the context of the secondary school attended. Details can be found in our admissions policy at

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/howToApply/ugAdmissionPolicyDataProtection.aspx>.

From 2012 onwards we will develop a system for using more contextual data supplied through UCAS to further help us assess the ability and the potential of applicants to the School.

5 Student retention and success

Generally, LSE has a good retention record. The latest HESA figures show that, in 2009, only 3.9% of our young UK undergraduates were not in HE following the year of entry. It should also be noted that HESA treats students awaiting summer re-sits in the following year in the same way that they account for students who have withdrawn. Our non-continuation rates are therefore inflated by the inclusion of summer re-sit students.

However, we recognise that there is still work to be done in supporting our students from under-represented groups, both in the transition to university life and throughout their undergraduate programmes. An overview of our existing provision, together with our proposed post-2012 activities are presented below.

Overview of existing and new on-course support at LSE

Student life-cycle	Existing on-course support	New on-course support
Pre-arrival	Welcome booklets Study skills information (hard copy and online) Online newsletters	Pre-sessional events for UK students Online mentoring for offer-holders Redesigned web-based information
Orientation/induction	Peer mentoring Study sessions for new students	Student-led induction sessions More harnessing SU societies More sign-posting of support services (campus promotion and website)
First year	Study skills workshops One-to-one tutorials Peer support pilot Learning World online support Dyslexia/dyspraxia support Support/training for teaching staff Academic advisers	Peer support roll-out UG-specific sessions (eg. exam revision, research skills) Super-reading training for dyslexic students. Use of LSE online portal for student support
All years	Study skills workshops One-to-one tutorials Peer support pilot Learning World online support Dyslexia/dyspraxia support Support/training for teaching staff Academic advisers	UG-specific sessions (eg. exam revision, research skills) Super-reading training for dyslexic students. Use of LSE online portal for student support Monitoring/tracking of students' access to support services

Target groups for on-course support

We are eager not to stigmatise or ghettoise our students from under-represented groups once they are enrolled at the School. Indeed, data on the continuation rates of some of our most popular courses suggest

that students from low socio-economic classes fare just as well, if not better, than other students from higher socio-economic classes. This demonstrates that on-course support must be made available for *all* of our undergraduate students and not just those who are from under-represented groups. Difficulties encountered by students are often multi-factoral and complex; they rarely occur as a result of just one issue/aspect of a student's background.

However, we believe that there are UK students who are more at risk of feeling isolated and less able to call on support mechanisms on campus than others. These students may take longer than others to adapt to new ways of learning, may experience difficulties in engaging with other students in their class or may require additional help with aspects of university life.

Our new on-course activities will, therefore, be designed to help the following students in particular but, crucially, will be open to all students (UK, EU and Overseas) regardless of background.

- Students from low-performing state schools
- Students from low-participation neighbourhoods
- Students who have been in care
- Disabled students

We would also like to devote some of the additional income into more research into non-continuation rates and withdrawal rates.

Expenditure on student retention activities

We have allocated a budget of £225,000 in steady state to fund on-course and retention activities for students from under-represented groups. This is a proportion of the total resource we expect to devote to retention and on-course support for our undergraduate cohort. The *total* expenditure on our retention activities for *all* undergraduate students will be more than £225,000 in steady state.

6 Financial support for students

The LSE bursary scheme

We will put in place a generous bursary scheme for students from low-income backgrounds which makes the largest awards to students with the lowest household income and tapers to a maximum threshold equal to that for a partial grant. Students not in receipt of a grant are not eligible for an LSE bursary.

The National Scholarship Programme allocation in 2012-13 has been tied to the lowest income band, ensuring that the neediest students benefit from this award. We will review the eligibility criteria for the scheme after the first year of NSP operation.

Students in receipt of an LSE bursary will be able to use the award to offset the cost of their LSE accommodation fees.

It is assumed that we will be able to use the Student Loans Company system to assess eligibility for bursaries as under the current system.

Distribution and cost of the LSE bursary scheme for UK students in 2014-15

Students' household income	Grant status	Estimated no. of UK students in steady state	LSE award per annum	Estimated annual expenditure in steady state
£0 - £3,000	Full grant	132	£3,500	£462,000
£3001 - £18,000	Full grant	261	£3,500	£913,500
£18,001 - £25,000	Full grant	93	£3,000	£279,000
£25,001 - £30,000	Partial grant	54	£2,500	£135,000
£30,001 - £35,000	Partial grant	57	£1,500	£85,500
£35,001 - £40,000	Partial grant	54	£750	£40,500
£40,001 - £42,600	Partial grant	57	£500	£28,500
	<i>Total</i>	708		£1,944,000

It should be noted that we also plan to make the LSE bursaries available to non-UK EU students. We estimate that this will cost an additional £138,000 per year in steady state. These figures have not been included in the tables above. However, if taken together with the spend on bursaries for UK students and with the WP and retention expenditure, it will bring the overall LSE expenditure on access for low income students to 50% of the additional fee income in 2014-15.

The National Scholarship Programme

LSE has been awarded a provisional allocation of £111,000 for the NSP in 2012, the equivalent of 37 awards of £3,000. We will match this award with an additional £3,000 per student which will be made in years 2 and 3. We propose to make the NSP awards available to all students from England with a residual household income of between £0 and £3,000 per year. We estimate that we will enrol 44 students per year in this income bracket. This means that we will *more* than match-fund the £111,000 allocation should we enrol more than 37 students from this income bracket in 2012.

We assume that the NSP allocation will increase to £222,000 in 2013 and £333,000 in 2014. We will continue to match-fund these allocations with £3,000 of LSE funding in subsequent years.

Students in receipt of the NSP will have to take £2,000 of the award as a discount against their accommodation in LSE halls of residence or as a discount against their tuition. The remainder of the award will be made as a cash bursary, alongside the LSE bursary. We will make sure to brand the first year £3,000 award as an NSP award.

7 Targets and milestones

Our targets and milestones take account of the success that we have seen since the introduction of variable fees in 2006 and the commitments laid out in our first Access Agreement.

WP activity

(a) Our 2011 Access Agreement includes a target of engaging with 1800 students a year across all year groups. This is more than double the number of UK and EU students we enrol each year on our undergraduate programmes. We aim to increase our WP reach by 110 students per year from 2012 to 2017, ultimately reaching 2350 students in 2017 (three times our UK/EU enrolment target).

(b) We aim to increase the number of students progressing from our WP schemes LSE CHOICE and Pathways to Law onto our undergraduate programmes. Our last monitoring report to OFFA shows that we enrolled 9 students from Pathways to Law and LSECHOICE from the most recent cohorts.

We aim to increase the number of students enrolled on LSE undergraduate programmes by around 4 per year from 2012 to 2017, ultimately reaching 30 students enrolled from Pathways to Law and LSECHOICE by 2017.

Applications to and enrolments at LSE

(a) We aim to encourage applications to the School from students from state schools and, in particular, students from low-performing state schools (ie. schools with an average A*-C GCSE performance below the national average).

In 2010, 75% of our UK applications came from the state sector. Of the applications received from comprehensive schools, just 257 of these applications came from low performing state schools (ie. schools performing below the national average for grades A* to C at GCSE). We aim to increase the number of qualified students applying from low-performing state schools to 400 by 2017.

This target takes into account (a) the fact that we have increased our entry requirements for more than half of our undergraduate programmes in 2011 and 2012; and (b) it may take a couple of years for the new fees and bursary programme to attract more students from low performing schools. We therefore expect to see a dip in applications before we see an increase from around 2014 onwards.

(b) We aim to encourage more applications to the School from black African/Caribbean students.

In 2010, 624 of our UK applicants who disclosed their ethnicity were black African/Caribbean students. This constituted 7.9% of our Home UK applications. We aim to increase the number of black African/Caribbean students applying to LSE to 750 of our UK applications by 2017.

This equates to an increase in applications from black African/Caribbean students of around 25 per year.

(c) We aim to continue to make progress towards our HESA benchmarks. In particular, we will aim to

- enrol between 70 and 72% of our UK intake from state schools
- enrol between 19 and 21% of our UK intake from low socio-economic backgrounds
- enrol between 4 and 6% of our UK intake from low participation neighbourhoods

Retention

(a) We aim to reduce our withdrawal rate of students to 3% by 2017.

8 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

The LSE WP team, in conjunction with one of our social science PhD students, has developed a new evaluation model which will be rolled out in 2011. We will collect data from the participants of all of our activities with a view to (a) measuring the impact of the WP activities on aspirations and awareness of HE and (b) measuring the impact of the WP activities on attainment levels.

We are setting up a new WP steering group which will comprise members of the WP team, LSE academics, teachers from link schools, LSE students and staff from LSE support services. This group will meet once a term to discuss WP issues and to monitor progress against targets.

The steering group will report to the WP Advisory Group, chaired by the Pro Director for Teaching and Learning. On a day-to-day level, the WP team reports to the Head of Recruitment and Admissions, based in the Academic Registrar's Division.

Monitoring of applications, enrolments and bursary spend takes place on an annual basis and data are reported to the Academic Planning and Resources Committee and the Academic Board each Autumn.

We will continue to report annually to OFFA on all elements of our Access Agreement and Widening Participation Strategic Assessment.

9 Provision of information to students

We will publish clear, accessible and timely information for applicants and students on the undergraduate fees and our financial support arrangements. We will do this through a range of media, including:

- LSE website
- Prospectus (online and paper copy)
- Financial support brochure
- Focus LSE newsletter for schools and colleges
- Open days, conference for schools advisers, school visits, recruitment events, etc.
- WP brochure/materials

We will also provide relevant information to UCAS and the SLC in a timely fashion.

