



Bath Spa University
Access Agreement
2011/12

(Revised November 2010)

1. Introduction

This Access Agreement sets out how Bath Spa University will safeguard and promote fair access for students. It builds upon a history of successful development of widening participation at the University. Key aspects of the information required for this Access Agreement are now integrated into the University Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009/10 to 2011/12, to which this document is an appendix.

2. Aims

The aims of this Access Agreement are to:

1. increase the participation rates of students from under-represented groups, especially young people from NS SEC 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8*, those from disadvantaged backgrounds and disabled people
2. promote fair access, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds
3. ensure that students are fully prepared so that they benefit from higher education (HE)
4. support student success and employability
5. gain approval from the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) to charge variable tuition fees.

3. Scope

This agreement covers all students who are registered to follow a first full-time undergraduate course, including those taking Bath Spa University courses at further education colleges (FECs) under franchise agreements. It also covers Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA)-funded full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses.

4. Franchised courses

All of our full-time, undergraduate franchised courses that are delivered by our Wessex Partnership colleges are covered by this agreement. As part of its widening participation activities, and to strengthen its regional role, Bath Spa University has formed partnerships with a number of regional FECs. This partnership is known as the Wessex Partnership. We will work actively with the higher education managers in our partner colleges to deliver widening participation activities to students and their supporters, partner schools and employers.

5. Fee limits

In 2011/12 we intend to set our tuition fees at a rate equal to the variable fee ceiling set annually by the Government. The tuition fee for a full time Home or European Union student who does not already hold an equivalent or higher qualification and who is not on a sandwich year will be £3,375.

*National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification

4. Small employers and own account workers
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations
6. Semi-routine occupations
7. Routine occupations
8. Never worked and long-term unemployed.

6. Bursaries

6.1 All students who are in receipt of the full state Maintenance Grant will receive bursaries that exceed the minimum requirement.

6.2 Bursary funding for full-time PGCE and Undergraduate courses, including Foundation Degree and DIPHE courses

Eligible students entering year 1 of eligible courses in 2011/12

Bursaries will be awarded to students on the basis of household income as evidenced by their student support application. Year 1 students receiving full student support (household incomes up to £25,000) will receive bursaries of between £500 and £350.

Eligible students in years 2 & 3 of eligible courses in 2011/12

In 2011/12 Year 2 & 3 students from households with income up to £17,000 will be eligible for a £1,200 bursary award. Students from households with household income between £17,000 and £39,000 will receive bursary support of between £1,000 and £100 per annum. The exact amount will be determined by their household income band. Students from households with income exceeding £39,000 will not be eligible for bursary support.

6.3 Total value of bursaries

We estimate that approximately 15% of the total additional fee income in 2011/12 will be awarded in student bursary support. Assuming no fee increase or bursary scheme change in 2012/13 & 2013/14 this percentage will drop to 9% by 2013/14 as the new Bursary scheme works through to year 3 in 2013/14.

7. Provision of information to students

The University recognises the importance of providing high-quality, clear and accurate financial information, including costs and the financial support available, to enable students to make informed choices. We will continue to work with students and their advisors to increase awareness and understanding of the latest student finance arrangements, and to help make sure that finance is not seen as a barrier to higher education, especially among those from under-represented groups.

To ensure that we meet this commitment, the following information will be made available to all students:

a. The costs associated with study including:

- the level of tuition fees
- accommodation costs
- an indication of living costs
- an estimation of additional study costs such as studio fees, books, specialist equipment, field trips etc.

b. The range of financial support available to students including:

- Maintenance Grant, Special Support Grant, Student Fee and Maintenance Loans and other targeted state support
- Bath Spa University bursaries

- the Access to Learning Fund (ALF)
- Disabled Students' Allowance (where applicable)
- other sources of funding, as may be available.

Information about annual costs and an indication of the likely financial support package will be made available to students as well as a projection of the expected aggregate costs and likely financial support package for the duration of courses.

A wide variety of networks and opportunities will be used to ensure that students have clear and accurate information upon which to make decisions including:

- the University prospectus
- the University website, which will also provide links to useful external sources of information and tools such as cost and support 'ready reckoners'
- University open days and campus visit days
- school and college liaison visits
- widening participation campus-based events and outreach visits to schools, colleges, Access to Higher Education courses, workplaces and community groups and support networks such as the Bath and North East Somerset Black Families Education Support Group and those working with children in care
- open days for employers and employees
- Connexions and other information, advice and guidance organisations
- information packs for all applicants to the University
- electronic message boards in key communal areas of our campuses, such as the Students' Union, refectories and libraries
- an in-house student financial planning service.

Information will be made available to:

- all prospective students
- all registered students
- significant others who may be involved in the decision making process with students. This could include parents, carers, partners, teachers, tutors or lecturers, employers, careers services, children in care teams or social workers.

Information for prospective and registered students will be made available at the following key times:

- on campus visit days and at outreach events
- pre-registration, after an offer is accepted
- during registration
- during induction
- throughout first term and at other key times in the academic year.

We will endeavour to ensure that information reaches those from groups who are under-represented in higher education and at Bath Spa University, including:

- young people in local schools, colleges and community groups from NS SEC 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 backgrounds
- young people who are from low income households, particularly those where there is no parental experience of higher education

- young people who are from low participation neighbourhoods
- disabled people
- mature students, especially those with no previous experience of higher education and who are from low participation neighbourhoods
- young people who are in care or are care-leavers
- those from ethnic minority groups
- learners on courses leading to vocational qualifications.

8. Widening participation outreach and student success

The University has established a firm foundation and high reputation for widening participation. The University's Widening Participation Strategy, including strategic aims and objectives and approach to targeting outreach activity is set out in the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009/10 to 2011/12. Our widening participation aims are to:

- increase the participation of people from under-represented groups by promoting fair access to the University's full range of provision from foundation degree to postgraduate programmes
- support the participation of under-represented groups in higher education from pre-entry to employment
- contribute to national and regional widening participation and access agendas through partnership working.

The range of widening participation activity at the University is closely linked to the HEFCE student life-cycle model¹. The outreach activity planned for 2011/12 that will be funded through additional fee income is summarised in Appendix 1

8.1 Outreach activities

As part of its broader widening participation strategy, the University works with over fifty schools, seventeen colleges, young people in care or from a care background, mature and Access to Higher Education learners, people with disabilities and learning difficulties and a range of community groups. The outreach programme aims to raise aspiration to higher education, support educational achievement and encourage and support people from under-represented groups to progress to higher education. Engagement with parents and carers is a critical aspect of this activity and focuses upon high quality and accurate information, advice and guidance about student finance, student support and the UCAS process. With a number of local schools, tailored programmes of activities based on the Learner Progression Matrix² model have been developed to support learners as they move up through the school.

¹HEFCE Strategic Plan 2003-08, HEFCE July 2003/35, www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2003/03_35.htm

² Learner Progression Matrix, Aimhigher Coventry and Warwickshire, www.aimhighercw.org/practitioner/the-lpm

8.2 Promoting fair access

The University adopts a robust policy of equality of opportunity in admissions in order to achieve a diverse student population. We welcome applications from students who come from families new to higher education, students with disabilities, students from different socio-

economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, mature students and those without standard entrance qualification and we work to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged in the admissions process. The University Fair Access and Admissions Statements are set out in Sections 1.7 and 1.8 of the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009/10 to 2011/12.

8.3 Partnership working

For over a decade the University has been proactive in regional partnerships, working to develop initiatives that encourage participation in higher education, including Aimhigher, the Western Foundation Degree Consortium and the Western Vocational Life Long Learning Network. The University's commitment to partnership working through greater collaboration with regional higher education institutions, local further education colleges and others is one of seven key themes in the University's Strategic Action Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12. However, the University's objectives continue to be set firmly within national policies for education and as we move into the post-Browne Report³ era, we will be seeking opportunities for collaborative working to contribute to Government educational policies, particularly those concerned with improving opportunities and accessibility for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

8.4 Academies and Trust Schools

In 2010 the University became a co-sponsor of Sarum Academy in Salisbury, Wiltshire. In 2011/12 we will direct additional fee income to further develop our programme of activities to support the Academy, including the development of the Academy's ethos and its curriculum, professional development for staff, the provision of community education for families and other adults and an outreach programme for learners, based on the principles of the Learner Progression Matrix model, to raise aspiration and attainment and support progression to higher education.

8.5 Wessex Partnership

All of our full-time, undergraduate franchised courses that are delivered by our Wessex Partnership colleges are covered by this agreement and additional fee income will continue to support the costs associated with maintaining and developing the Partnership. Our Wessex students will be supported at key stages of the student life-cycle through the activity funded by additional fee income summarised in Appendix 1.

8.6 Student success

Additional Access Agreement funding established the Student Achievement Coordinator and Head of Employability posts, the Study Skills Support Centre, a new comprehensive careers service and the Bath Spa Plus initiative that was launched in 2008/09. In 2010/11, the Study Skills Support Centre was reconfigured as the Writing and Learning Centre.

³ *Securing a sustainable future for higher education: An independent review of higher education funding and student finance*, Lord Browne of Madingley, October 2010 www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report

Bath Spa Plus has brought together expertise from key areas of the University such as Volunteering, the Careers Service, the Business Support Office and the Writing and Learning Centre to offer a programme of interactive workshops, seminars and presentations along with

volunteering, work experience and networking opportunities with employers and industry experts to help students gain a wide range of practical employability skills.

8.7 Funding

In addition to activity undertaken with HEFCE widening access funding, the University has been an active participant in regional projects such as the Aimhigher West Area Partnership and Western Vocational Life Long Learning Network. While the future of regional project funding is uncertain for 2011/12, outreach work activity will continue to be supported by Access Agreement investment. The activities described in Appendix 1 are new, or extensions of existing schemes. The level of additional Access Agreement investment, along with other sources of funding available to the University for outreach work is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Sources of funding.

| Funding Strands - £s | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| HEFCE widening access funding ¹ | 391,038 | 333,234 | 333,234 |
| Aimhigher West Area Partnership ² | 200,300 | 168,792 | 0 |
| Additional fee income ³ | 10,411,980 | 11,072,160 | 11,347,700 |
| Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network ⁴ | 49,000 | 0 | 0 |

Notes

¹ The future HEFCE widening access funding levels are based on actual figures in 2009/10 and 2010/11 with no projections for inflation or any other uplift in 2011/12. There is no indication of funding levels beyond 2011/12 so no further forecast is given

² The Aimhigher project is set to end in July 2011. As yet there no indication of whether elements of it will be retained or another national or regional initiative will be funded to take its place. With no known expectation of income none has been forecast.

³ The additional fee income is the total additional income generated by higher tuition fees. A proportion of this will be set aside for widening participation as detailed in Appendix 1.

⁴ The Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network funding ended in 2010/11.

9. Milestones and measuring progress

9.1 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) performance indicators

Our commitment to widen access to those from key under-represented groups is stressed throughout the University's Strategic Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12, and we seek an improvement in key HESA performance indicators by vigorously pursuing our Access Agreement (Bath Spa University Strategic Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12, Sections 1.2 and 2.4). The key output statistics by which we will measure progress will be the following HESA performance indicators:

- young full-time undergraduate entrants from state schools and colleges (HESA Table T1b)
- young full-time undergraduate entrants from low participation neighbourhoods

- (HESA Table T1b)
- young full-time undergraduate entrants from NS SEC 4, 5, 6 & 7 (HESA Table T1bi)
 - mature full-time undergraduate entrants with no previous higher education and from a low participation neighbourhood (HESA Table T2a)
 - full-time undergraduate students in receipt of a Disabled Students' Allowance (HESA Table T7).

We also aim to reach the 2010/11 targets that are shown in Table 2. The targets for 2010/11 were part of our original Access Agreement, which was written in 2004/05.

Table 2. HESA Performance Indicators for the recruitment of entrants from key widening participation groups 2004/05 to 2008/09 showing actual number of students, performance indicator as a percentage of total undergraduate entrants in bold and location adjusted benchmarks in italics.

| HESA Performance Indicator | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2010/11 targets |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| | Actual Number Percentage <i>Location Adjusted B/M</i> | Actual Number Percentage <i>Location Adjusted B/M</i> | Actual Number Percentage <i>Location Adjusted B/M</i> | Actual Number Percentage <i>Location Adjusted B/M</i> | Actual Number Percentage <i>Location Adjusted B/M</i> | |
| Young full-time undergraduate entrants from state schools and colleges | 915 94.0% <i>91.1%</i> | 1,045 95.2% <i>93.9%</i> | 1,090 95.1% <i>91.2%</i> | 1,115 95.2% <i>90.5%</i> | 1,335 95.3% <i>92.3%</i> | 96.0% |
| Young full-time undergraduate entrants from NS SEC 4, 5, 6 & 7 | 240 28.2% <i>29.7%</i> | 250 26.9% <i>31.9%</i> | 320 31.3% <i>31.3%</i> | 320 30.4% <i>31.0%</i> | 455 ¹ 34.9% <i>35.1%</i> | 31.0% |
| Young full-time undergraduate entrants from low participation neighbourhoods | 115 12.1% <i>11.6%</i> | 115 ² 11.1% <i>13.9%</i> | 125 ² 10.4% <i>10.0%</i> | 115 ² 9.2% <i>10.1%</i> | 125 ² 8.9% <i>10.2%</i> | 11.0% |
| Mature full-time undergraduate entrants with no previous higher education and from low participation neighbourhoods | 30 8.4% <i>10.7%</i> | 45 12.4% <i>14.0%</i> | 75 ² 16.8% <i>13.7%</i> | 35 ² 13.0% <i>13.8%</i> | 60 ² 11.4% <i>13.1%</i> | 16.0% |
| Full-time undergraduate students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance | 225 6.1% <i>5.0%</i> | 280 7.5% <i>5.6%</i> | 275 6.9% <i>4.6%</i> | 355 8.4% <i>5.8%</i> | 375 8.2% <i>5.9%</i> | 6.0% |

Notes

¹ From 2008/09 question asked on UCAS form changed making previous data incomparable

² From 2006/07 new POLAR 2 data were used making previous data incomparable

The HESA data for 2008/09 showed that the University either exceeded or was close to the total percentage for England in the key widening participation performance indicators shown in Table 2.

9.2 Bath Spa University performance indicators

In addition to monitoring our progress in widening participation through HESA performance indicators, we will also monitor our progress in relation to our peer institutions in the sector. As part of the University Strategic Action Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12, we have developed a comprehensive suite of 27 performance indicators relevant to a teaching-led university, which include indicators directly related to widening participation and access (Bath Spa University Strategic Action Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12, Section 6). Each one of the set of performance indicators is graded as good (above benchmark), satisfactory (at or about benchmark) or poor (below benchmark) by comparison with our peers. We will actively seek to improve any performance indicators rated as satisfactory or poor to good, including those relating to

widening participation and access (Bath Spa University Strategic Action Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12, Section 6.5).

9.3 Higher education bursary and scholarship scheme (HEBSS) data

The data that the University holds on students qualifying for bursaries through HEBSS, including data relating the proportion of students eligible for full state support, have been used for the monitoring of the Access Agreement and the strategic planning and operational management of the associated widening participation outreach objectives since 2006/07.

The HESA performance indicator NS SEC 4, 5, 6 & 7 is used as a proxy for low income and disadvantaged backgrounds. However, socio-economic class is derived from the student's view of his or her highest earning parent's occupation, so can be subject to error. Furthermore, students whose socio-economic class data are unknown are assigned to a class based on their home postcode, or where there is no postcode are proxied by the whole population average distribution. The HEBSS data will be used to measure our performance in recruiting and supporting students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and augment HESA performance indicator data on socio-economic class for young full-time undergraduate entrants.

It was originally planned that the HEBSS data for 2006/07 shown in Table 3 would be used as a baseline for interim monitoring, however, this was revised in 2008/09 when the increased threshold for full state support was introduced.

Table 3. Baseline HEBSS data for 2006/07¹.

| Undergraduate entrants including Foundation Degree, Dip HE and HND paying £3,000 tuition fees | Total undergraduate entrants in HEBSS from low-income households (income below £37,425) | Total undergraduate entrants in HEBSS from low-income households as a % of total undergraduate entrants paying £3,000 tuition fees | Undergraduate entrants in receipt of full BSU bursary support | Undergraduate entrants in receipt of full BSU bursary as a % of total undergraduate entrants paying £3,000 tuition fees | Undergraduate entrants in receipt of full DIUS Maintenance Grant | Undergraduate entrants in receipt of full DIUS Maintenance Grant as a % of total undergraduate entrants paying £3,000 tuition fees |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| All | 832 | 56.0% | 580 | 39.0% | 592 | 40.0% |
| Under 21 | 561 | 38.0% | 358 | 24.0% | 364 | 24.5% |
| Over 21 ² | 271 | 18.0% | 222 | 15.0% | 228 | 15.5% |

Notes

¹ As of the audit date 1st June 2007.

² For consistency with HESA Performance Indicators, entrants are classified as over 21 if over 21 years of age on the 30th of September of the academic year in which they enter Bath Spa University

9.4 Milestones to measure additional outreach activity

Detailed targets and milestones to identify a range of measurable outcomes relating to widening participation activity are described in Table 2.6.1 of the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009/10 to 2011/12.

The targets associated with the delivery of outreach activity funded by additional fee income as part of this Access Agreement 2011/12 are set out in Appendix 1.

10. Institutional monitoring arrangements

10.1 Activities

Targets associated with the delivery of outreach activity set out in Appendix 1, and progress towards achieving the targets and milestones described in Sections 2.5 and 2.6 of the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009/10 to 2011/12 will be monitored by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and reported in our annual Access Agreement and Widening Participation Strategic Assessment monitoring return. Table 2.6.1 in the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009/10 to 2011/12 provides a detailed description of our wider monitoring and evaluation targets and milestones.

10.2 Data

An annual analysis of the HESA performance indicator data listed above in Table 2, other relevant HESA performance indicator data and a range of additional internal monitoring indicators, including those described in Table 2.6.1 of the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009/10 to 2011/12, will be made by the Widening Participation and Access Manager.

10.3 Annual Report

An annual report on progress will be made to the Board of Governors.

Appendix 1

Summary of planned outreach activity funded by additional fee income 2011/12

| Activity Area and target groups | Nature of activity | Volume of activity |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Formal partnerships Co-sponsor of Sarum Academy</p> <p>Wessex Partnership Colleges Foundation degree provision and support</p> | <p>Generic staff development day Subject-based staff development</p> <p>Outreach activity for learners</p> <p>16 FdAs delivered in 7 FECs 2 FdAs delivered by private providers WBL Honours Degree delivered by partner college</p> <p>Enrolment sessions in partner colleges Induction Days for Years 1 and 2</p> <p>Transition from FdA to Honours Induction programme</p> | <p>4 events/all school staff 2 events/all departmental staff</p> <p>Programme of activities based on learner progression Matrix model</p> <p>20 FdAs offered through 29 programmes</p> <p>3 WBL Honours Degrees</p> <p>40 sessions</p> <p>40 Induction Days</p> <p>3 Induction Programmes</p> |
| <p>WP outreach activity Primary Programme with schools that feed into secondary schools identified by Aimhigher West Area Partnership Intervention Model</p> <p>Targeted at school level using Aimhigher West Area Partnership Intervention Model and at individual learner level through HEFCE targeting guidelines to teachers/tutors where possible. Includes some events that make up tailored programmes based on Learner Progression Matrix model</p> <p>Supporting the 14-19 Diploma Targeted at school level using Aimhigher West Area Partnership Intervention Model</p> <p>Contribute to regional outreach programme for children in care and care-leavers as part of our Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark strategy</p> <p>Pilot short-term mentoring programme for learners with disabilities</p> <p>Bespoke VI Form Conferences</p> | <p>Awareness and aspiration-raising three-stage programme that includes one campus visit day</p> <p>Generic HE awareness days Subject enrichment Level 3 UCAS/Finance IAG School/college careers events School/community parent events Campus-based parent evening BME events</p> <p>Curriculum-based programmes to support specific courses</p> <p>Programmes to support Extended Project, including library support</p> <p>Children in care outreach programmes include social/team-building events Generic campus visits Subject-based events Regional summer school IAG events for social workers/LA and carers</p> <p>Mentoring programmes delivered by undergraduates with a declared disability</p> <p>Subject-based activities for Level 3 students in a conference format</p> | <p>Programmes with four schools</p> <p>10 events 5 events 15 events 12 events 3 events 1 event 2 events</p> <p>3 programmes</p> <p>6 programmes</p> <p>1 programme per 8 Local Authorities</p> <p>Programmes with two schools</p> <p>3 events</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Mature and Access student outreach activity and transitional support</p> | <p>Managing Western Access Progression Agreement (WAPA) Drop-in centre at open days Pilot regional 'UCAS Fair'-type event for Access students Access coursework lab session Access visits to support coursework assignments Designated first point of contact Access course outreach visits Bespoke campus visits Annual Access Conference Study Skills events on point of entry Study skill support through Writing and Learning Centre</p> | <p>4 meetings per year 4 events 1 event 1 event 40 visits Between 100-200 enquiries 5 visits subject to demand 10 events subject to demand 1 event 3 events Sessions as required</p> |
| <p>Partnership engagement Working in regional partnerships</p> | <p>Strategic-level involvement in key regional partnerships that support opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups</p> <p>Seek out opportunities for involvement in any new national or regional post-2011 partnerships that support opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups after introduction of new funding arrangements in 2012/13</p> | <p>OCNSWR Higher Education Access Committee WAPA Steering Group WVLLN 14-19 Diploma Strategy Group B&NES 14-19 Strategy Group B&NES Learning Partnership B&NES Black Families Educational Support Group</p> |