

## BLACKPOOL AND THE FYLDE COLLEGE

### ACCESS AGREEMENT

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#### Introduction

Blackpool and The Fylde College has an extensive and longstanding portfolio of Higher Education programmes, which comprises awards at degree and post graduate levels including Diploma in Management Studies; and intermediate and certificate level courses including Foundation Degrees, Higher National Awards, Professional Maritime Awards and Professional Construction Awards. The great majority of programmes are validated by Lancaster University, with a small number validated by other universities, including the University of Central Lancashire, Liverpool John Moore.

All the higher education provision at Blackpool and The Fylde College is directly funded.

#### Level of fees

A fee of up to **£3060** will be charged for all full-time Higher Education Honours Degree programmes from **September 2010**, including top-up degrees. The fee will apply equally to United Kingdom students and to students who are nationals of any other state of the European Union.

The fee for full-time students on Higher National Diplomas and Foundation Degrees will remain at **£1310**, subject to any changes introduced by the government.

The higher level of fee will not be charged to part-time students.

Students who begin a full-time course part way through an academic year will only have to pay a fee proportionate to the remainder of their tuition for that year. This could occur where a programme recruits twice in the same year, or where a student transfers from a part-time to a full-time programme.

#### Bursaries and other financial support for students

The College is fully committed to widening participation to Higher Education and to ensuring fair access. The bursary arrangements the institution introduced from 2007/08 are based on two key considerations :

- That the cost of full time higher education to students should not act as an entry barrier to those capable of benefiting from such an education
- That income from tuition revenue should be managed to provide direct financial support for students, to enhance their learning and to encourage their progression and achievement

All students on full-time honours degree programmes will be eligible to apply for a bursary of £1000 in year 1 of their study and in subsequent years dependent upon continuation of their study and successful completion of the previous year.

Bursary payments will be administered in the following way :

- Two payments of £500 and £500 in the Spring and Summer terms in the first year of study, to provide general financial support, and to act as an incentive to assist retention, achievement, and progression between levels of study
- Further bursaries will be available to all students progressing into their second and third year of study providing that they have passed each module at that lower level
- £500 will be paid in the Spring term and £500 in the Summer term to provide an incentive to assist retention and achievement
- **Students who have poor attendance and/or who are not progressing on their programme but who are still registered at the institution will only receive a minimum payment of £99. This will be payable in the Summer Term.**

In addition to bursary arrangements, students will also be eligible for payments under the Access to Learning Fund. Payments under this fund can provide short term repayable loans, and offer hardship funds in cases of serious financial difficulty. Guidance notes for higher education students seeking payments under this fund are available on the college website and in materials produced by the Student Services department.

### **Outreach activities**

It is anticipated that the current extensive range of outreach activities will continue although the College reserves the right to amend this depending upon any changes in widening participation funding. Current activities include :

- Events and promotional materials intended for mature learners and for non-traditional entrants to Higher Education such as Apprentices progressing onto Level 4/5 provision
- Aspiration-raising activities targeted at pupils aged 14 years and above including roadshows, visits from our HE Admissions team and master classes.
- Open days held at the College
- Participation in open days held at local, regional and national venues
- Mailshots including promotional materials aimed at encouraging our own Level 3 students to progress onto our higher education provision
- Visits to local and regional schools, including primary schools, and colleges
- A 'keeping warm' campaign for all applicants through out the year of application.

These activities are aimed predominately at pupils and students studying within Blackpool, Wyre and the Fylde Coast in local schools and sixth form colleges including the institution's own students and work based learners.

## **Information on financial support available to students**

Financial information will be made available to all prospective students considering courses coming under this agreement. Such information will be guided by the principles of accessibility, transparency and clarity.

Information will summarise the annual and aggregate fee for the chosen course, bursary arrangements, and other sources of financial support available to students. It will also identify the sources from which students can obtain advice regarding the general financial framework applying to students undertaking full time higher education studies, so that they can establish the likely level of debt they will incur by the end of their studies. The institution will provide a full range of financial advice to prospective and current students through the production of fact sheets outlining fee charges and the bursaries available to students with worked examples, through individual interviews and in response to queries received in person, by telephone or by email. Student Services will also provide briefing sessions as part of Open Day events and will be available to give individual advice and guidance.

During induction all students will receive a presentation from the Student Services team which will, inter alia, cover issues associated with student finance. It is the intention of the College that all information relating to costs and means of support for students will be available in the Prospectus and on the college website.

## **Expenditure of access measures**

The institution will direct its additional fee revenue to support access measures in the following ways:

- Through bursary payments to students
- Through the outreach activities outlined earlier
- Through funding to provide additional learning support for students in the form of specialist learning mentors and additional study skills workshops

## **Institutional milestones and objects**

The institution has established the following milestones and objectives in relation to its higher education provision falling under this access agreement :

- Recruitment targets : to meet the planned target intake onto programmes of study
- Retention targets : to achieve a minimum annual retention rate of 85% in each year on higher education programmes
- Progression targets : to achieve an annual internal progression rate from full time FE vocational level 3 programmes of 30% of completers, and to achieve an annual minimum internal progression rate from foundation degree completers onto articulating honours degree programmes of at least 40% where appropriate programmes are available. As a first step we will establish base line figures in each of these areas which we will use to set and monitor annual targets

- Widening participation : to maintain the planned target intake for the proportion of students coming from the widening participation categories. As a first step we will establish a base line figure which we will use to set and monitor annual targets
- Curriculum development : to respond to the identified needs of employers and students by developing new programmes and offering curriculum flexibility

## **Monitoring and Review**

The institution will undertake annual monitoring of this access agreement to confirm compliance and progress towards the achievement of the milestones it has established. Responsibility for the monitoring report will rest with the Director of Higher Education Development. The report will be presented to the College Strategic Management Team for approval, and following such approval be sent to the Academic Board and to the College Governors.

The annual monitoring report will be submitted to the Director of OFFA following its approval by the College Governors. The report will be presented to the Strategic Management Team at such time as to ensure that OFFA will receive the report by its July deadline. The report will incorporate the following sections :

- Financial data summarising recruitment levels, payment of bursaries, and other financial support made available to students
- Outreach activities that have been undertaken during the year  
and
- Progression made in meeting institutional targets and milestones