

Access Agreement for 2011/12

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Oxford Brookes University seeks to develop students' personal and intellectual growth and provide access for those who would not otherwise contemplate higher education. The University has a long tradition of embracing students from diverse backgrounds and continues to seek new ways of facilitating progression to higher education.
- 1.2 This access agreement provides both information on bursaries and financial aid packages and information concerning the use of additional fee income for widening participation activities. This Agreement should be read in conjunction with the University's Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA).
- 1.3 This Access Agreement relates specifically to the academic year 2011/12 and was first submitted in September 2010 (a revised version was submitted in November 2010). Any references to subsequent years are provisional and may be reviewed following revisions to the arrangements for student financial support expected to be announced later in 2010.

2. Fee Limits

- 2.1 Oxford Brookes charges the maximum allowable undergraduate fee for full-time home students. For 2011/12 this fee is £3,375. In subsequent years the fee will rise in accordance with Government announcements.
- 2.2 Oxford Brookes will inform prospective students of the total cost of their course prior to enrolment through the prospectus and relevant sections of our website. Students are advised that the fee will rise in line with the regulations published by the Government each year. The relevant section of our web-site may be accessed at:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/finance>

3. The Oxford Brookes Bursary Scheme

- 3.1 Oxford Brookes fully supports the principle of providing financial support to students with lower financial resources and invests generously in its bursary schemes. We believe that the University's bursary schemes target students presently under-represented in higher education by being straightforward, easily administered, transparent and underpinned with fair and simple eligibility criteria.
- 3.2 The scheme is open to all full-time undergraduate students from all schools whether independent or state and from across the UK. The sole eligibility criterion is based on family income.
- 3.3 Oxford Brookes has allocated a significant proportion of its fee income to support the bursary scheme above the minimum level specified by the Government.
- 3.4 The level of bursary an Oxford Brookes student might be entitled to will be assessed according to family income using the assessment communicated to the University via the SLC. The bands for 2011/12 are described in the table below.

Residual Household Income	Bursary
< £5,000	£ 1,800
£5,000-£9,999	£ 1,500
£10,000-£14,999	£ 1,200
£15,000-£19,999	£ 1,050
£20,000-£25,000	£ 900
£25,001-£29,999	£ 300
> £29,999	£0

3.5 We will provide cash allocations not fee remission. We believe that students are best placed to determine how they wish to spend their bursary. Under the Brookes scheme students may therefore decide how to spend this money – on accommodation or living expenses or in another way, entirely at their discretion.

4. Other Financial Support

4.1 Oxford Brookes has, for a number of years, allocated financial aid payments to students who could demonstrate urgent financial need. The allocation of funding has been and will continue to be made through specialist advisors within the Financial Aid Office who administer the Access to Learning Fund and the Emergency Fund, the latter of which provides small payments to students with specific financial problems according to set criteria.

4.2 In addition to the bursary scheme, Oxford Brookes continues to provide resource for a Hardship Fund which is in addition to the Access to Learning Fund. This is aimed at supporting students who have already started courses at the University.

4.3 The Community Scholarship recognises and rewards applicants from the region who have a demonstrable ability to meet the offer threshold. They are assessed against any of four criteria: potential to succeed, regarded as successful role models within their school or FEI, committed to their studies or have overcome personal or social difficulties. The Community Scholarship is available to applicants from within our regional catchment and is awarded at a rate of £1,000 for the first year of the degree programme and £500 per annum for two subsequent years. Full details may be found at:

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/finance/support/comm_scholarships

4.4 Transition from Care Bursary. Students who are eligible for an HE Maintenance Grant from the SLC, and who have spent a period of time from the age of fourteen in local authority care, are eligible for an additional bursary of up to £2,000 per annum.

http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/finance/support/ug_home

4.5 International Exchange Scholarships. Full-time UK undergraduate students who receive the maximum Brookes Bursary can also receive an extra £750 per semester to fund studies abroad, rising to a maximum of £1,500 over two semesters.

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/finance/support/exchanges>

5. **Access to Information**

- 5.1 Oxford Brookes understands that the differences between fee arrangements and financial support in different higher education institutions can be highly confusing to potential students and their advisors. We also appreciate that, in order for students to make informed choices concerning their future, clear information about the levels of support available at Oxford Brookes University needs to be readily accessible.
- 5.2 The bursary scheme is summarised within the prospectus which is updated each year. In addition to the prospectus, Oxford Brookes has established a specific website designed to provide prospective students with a clear statement of the costs of studying at the University including the aggregate cost of tuition, and living costs and the institutional support available through our bursary schemes and other forms of financial aid. All information is available in various formats and available on request.
- 5.3 The website provides access to related sites including the SLC and relevant Government web-sites.
- 5.4 Oxford Brookes has also developed a range of printed leaflets. Visit day packs given to parents and applicants include detailed information on fees and bursaries. In addition, an information leaflet is sent to all applicants as soon as they have received an offer from the University. The Teachers' Information Pack, which is distributed annually, includes a general section on finance within which the fees and bursaries leaflet is included. All target schools and sixth forms are sent copies of the information leaflet and the UK recruitment team distribute information at presentations delivered to our target schools. Finally, the University publishes a magazine, 'Active', which is regularly sent to all target schools. A special regular feature on fees and bursaries is included.
- 5.5 Existing students also require clarification of fees and support schemes. The primary sources of advice for existing students are the University's website, the Financial Aid Office, the Student Finance Office and also the Student Directory and Handbook which provides an overview of the scheme and related matters.

6. **Outreach Activity**

- 6.1 Oxford Brookes has allocated additional funding to support outreach activities to raise aspirations and attainment; in 2011/12 we have planned expenditure of £290,000. This funding is additional to bursary and other financial support and is derived from our additional fee income.
- 6.2 Further details concerning our outreach programmes can be found in the University's Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA).

7. **Improved learner support and experience**

- 7.1 Oxford Brookes has established a fully resourced learner support facility, 'Upgrade', accessible to all students who require additional learning support. Activities supported by the facility include:
- tutorial surgeries
 - study skills seminars and surgeries for modules with low pass rates
 - electronic resource provision
 - e-mentoring
 - peer assisted learning scheme

7.2 Further information concerning Upgrade may be obtained from the University's web-site:

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/upgrade/>

8. Milestones

8.1 We established targets for widening participation in our original Access Agreement which were based on HESA Performance Indicators. We stated that the primary criterion for measuring the success of our access measures would be an increase in the percentage of enrolled students from state schools. Using our 2004 baseline data of around 67% we established the objective of increasing state school participation to 75% by 2010.

8.2 Whilst preparing our WPSA, in the light of guidance provided by HEFCE and OFFA as part of that exercise, and cognisant of the guidance provided by HEFCE for Aimhigher partnerships and higher education providers,¹ we clearly identified learners from lower socio-economic groups as the principal target group for widening participation, alongside our continuing commitment to recruit more students from maintained schools.

8.3 The table below sets out our two primary targets and trends in our performance: entrants from state schools and entrants from low socio-economic groups.²

Year	State school		Low socio-economic groups ³	
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved
2004/05	-	70%	-	26%
2005/06	-	72%	-	38%
2006/07	68%	74%	21%	42%
2007/08	68%	73%	21%	43%
2008/09	70%	74%	22%	44%
2009/10	72%	72%	23%	41%
2010/11	75%	-	26%	-
2011/12	75%	-	30%	-

8.4 We believe these targets are realistic and achievable. Brookes is located in a prosperous region where the cost of living is higher than the national average and while we attract students from all regions of the UK, our traditional markets have been drawn from the south Midlands and central southern counties. In this context, we are especially pleased to be successful in exceeding our HESA performance indicator for the recruitment of students from lower socio-economic groups; for example, in 2007/8 we recruited 43.2% of our young full-time entrants

¹ 'Higher education outreach: targeting disadvantaged learners', HEFCE, May 2007/12

² These figures are taken from the HESA Performance Indicators, table T1b (young full-time undergraduate entrants) to ensure national comparability. The latest PIs are for the academic year 2008/9, the figures for 2009/10 are calculated internally and will be up-dated with the HESA PI figure when published. The targets for state school entrants are taken from our Access Agreement which has targets to 2010/11, the targets for 2011/12 are new in this strategic assessment. The targets for low socio-economic groups are taken from the Access Agreement to 2009/10, the targets for 2010/11 and 2011/12 are new in this strategic assessment and ensure that the targets for 20011/12 are in line with the location-adjusted benchmark for this indicator as provided in the latest (2007/8) HESA Performance Indicators.

³ Low socio-economic groups = NS-SEC classes 4 (small employers and own account workers), 5 (lower supervisory and technical occupations), 6 (semi-routine occupations) and 7 (routine occupations).

to first degree programmes from lower socio-economic groups compared to our benchmark of 32.6% or our location-adjusted benchmark of 30.1%.⁴

8.5 Brookes also has a loyal following from a significant number of independent schools, many of which are located in the region. Increasing and maintaining rates of participation from under-represented groups therefore remains and will remain a challenge and we are placing considerable resources and effort into meeting our own targets whilst recognising that there remains an on-going task to achieve the benchmarks in the HESA Performance Indicators.

8.6 In addition, we place considerable value on our minority ethnic participation targets.⁵ We will continue to support and enhance our schemes that work with this group of students. The following table sets out our targets and achievements for the recruitment of students from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Year	Minority Ethnic Participation	
	Target	Achieved
2004/05	-	10%
2005/06	-	9%
2006/07	9%	11%
2007/08	10%	11%
2008/09	10%	11%
2009/10	11%	14%
2010/11	11%	-
2011/12	12%	-

9. We have not chosen to express our performance in relation to recruiting students with a disability as a specific institutional target but this is also an important area of work for us and one in which we achieve considerable success. The latest HESA Performance Indicators demonstrate that we are exceeding our benchmark for all undergraduate student categories in relation to the percentage of students we recruit in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)⁶.

Year	Students in Receipt of DSA					
	FT First Degree		FT All UG		PT All UG	
	Actual	B'mark	Actual	B'mark	Actual	B'mark
2004/05	7%	4%	6%	4%	2%	1%
2005/06	7%	4%	7%	4%	2%	2%
2006/07	8%	4%	7%	4%	3%	2%
2007/08	9%	5%	9%	5%	4%	3%

⁴ These figures are taken from the HESA Performance Indicators, table T1b (young full-time undergraduate entrants).

⁵ We have adopted the same definition used by HESA and the DfES in relation to schools in England; hence the term "minority ethnic" refers to all groups that are not recorded under the "White British" ethnic group category. The statistics cover enrolled UK domiciled students. (The University has changed the data definitions used in this Access Agreement to those contained in previous Agreements to make this measure more meaningful and accurate. The number of students from the "minority ethnic" group is now calculated as a percentage of all students with a known ethnic group. The dataset is also restricted to UK domiciled students matching the definitions used by HESA.)

⁶ These figures are taken from the HESA Performance Indicators, table T7 (Participation of students in higher education who are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA))

10. **Monitoring arrangements**

- 10.1 Monitoring data collected throughout the application cycle will form the basis of our annual monitoring report submitted to OFFA each year and against the ambitions of our WPSA.
- 10.2 The allocation of bursaries will be monitored and the number of eligible students will be recorded together with the number of requests made, and allocations granted to students for additional financial aid.