

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

REVISED ACCESS AGREEMENT

2008/9 – 2010/11

1. INTRODUCTION

This Access Agreement (hereafter referred to as the Agreement) is produced in accordance with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) Guidance to Institutions (November 2004/01). The Access Agreement has been reviewed following the announcement on the 5 July 2007 from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) to substantially increase the threshold levels for maintenance grants for students entering higher education from 2008/09. The revised Agreement takes account of subsequent guidance issued on 2 August 2007 from OFFA.

The revised Agreement will be operational for three years from 2008/09.

Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) requires such an Agreement because:

- (i) CCCU provides full-time under-graduate higher education (HE) courses which are funded directly from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA).
- (ii) CCCU wishes to charge tuition fees to home and European Union (EU) under-graduate students above the standard level in, or after 2006/07.

2. PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT

2.1 CCCU has a long history and tradition of widening access and participation of under-represented groups in HE. This commitment to widening participation is reflected in the Mission and strategic priorities of the institution.

2.2 Since CCCU has decided to charge a full-time under-graduate fee above the standard level, the purpose of this Agreement is to safeguard and promote fair access for under-represented groups – especially those from low-income groups.

2.3 The Agreement indicates how the measures will be put in place to:

- (i) support improvements in participation rates in HE from under-represented groups
- (ii) use funding for bursaries and other measures to assist students with the least financial resources to access and benefit from a place on one of our programmes.

3. FEE LIMITS

3.1 CCCU will set a fee limit of £3,145¹ for all programmes for which it is permitted to charge above the standard rate.

3.2 Where fees for particular programmes and/or programmes offered within particular partner institutions (e.g. Further Education [FE] Colleges, YMCA George Williams College) are set at a level below £3,145, the proportion of funding to be spent on bursaries and other financial measures for students from low income groups will be consistent with the proportions of additional funding allocated for these purposes in Section 4 of this document (i.e. approximately 30% of any additional income to be spent on bursaries and other access measures).

3.3. The fee level set will apply for the entire duration of the student's programme (subject to annual inflationary rises).

3.4 The fee level set (above the standard tuition fee) will not apply to gap year students entering in 2006/07 who notified the relevant authorities of their intention to defer their place before 1 August 2005.

4. AMOUNT OF ADDITIONAL FEE INCOME TO BE SPENT ON ACCESS MEASURES

4.1 An estimated 30% of the additional fee income each year will be spent on bursaries and other access measures including the associated costs of administering the bursaries and outreach activity as detailed in section 7.1.

5. BURSARIES AND OTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS²

¹ Increased annually in line with inflation

² Full-time under-graduate Social Work students in receipt of a non-means tested bursary from the Department of Health are excluded from the bursary provisions detailed in this Section.

5.1 All students in receipt of the Government's full maintenance grant, on programmes where the maximum fee of £3,145 is charged (except full-time, undergraduate Social Work students in receipt of a non-means tested bursary from the Department of Health), will receive at least a minimum bursary of £310 (though, in practice, the bursaries will be well above this minimum as detailed in this section).

5.2 Means-tested bursaries will be targeted at students in receipt of the Government's full and partial maintenance grants with bursaries of £820 paid to those in receipt of the Government's full maintenance grant and bursaries of £510 paid to those in receipt of a partial maintenance grant for those with household income levels up to £49,305 (where a fee of £3,145³ has been set).

5.3 Bursaries for new students entering from 2008/09 onwards (and students deferring from 2008-09) will be allocated to those in receipt of full and partial maintenance grants using the revised income thresholds of up to £25,000 for those receiving a bursary of £820; and £25,001 – £49,305 for those receiving a bursary of £510.

5.4 Continuing students will continue to be allocated university bursaries on the basis of income thresholds of £18,360 for full bursaries and £39,305 for partial bursaries. In addition continuing students with a family income of £39,305 – £46,125 will continue to receive a university bursary of £410 (in line with our previous Access Agreement 2006/07 – 2008/09).

5.5 Students in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) who receive the Government's full maintenance grant, will receive the maximum means-tested bursary of £820 (for those programmes where a fee of £3,145 has been set).

5.6 Since fees are expected to rise with inflation, the bursaries will be adjusted in line with inflation (anticipated to be in the region of 2.5% per annum).

5.7 CCCU has signed up to the full administrative model of the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) as devised by the

³ Should a fee be set below £3,145 for a particular partner institution or programme, 30% of the additional income will be used for bursary purposes for students from low and middle income groups, with students and other agencies advised accordingly of the exact bursary amounts once the fee has been fixed.

Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) (now Guild HE). An administrative fee of £3.75 is charged for each bursary administered by the Student Loans Company (SLC). A member of the University staff (0.5 fte) is also employed to assist with the administration of the scheme.

5.8 Scholarships of £1,000 per annum (approximately 20 in 2008/09) will be available to talented students in the areas of Sport, Music and Art for the duration of their programme (ie £60,000 over a three year period). The award of these scholarships will be determined by a panel according to clear criteria published on the university web-site and prospectus. The criteria will relate to outstanding performance in the applicant's chosen discipline. Students offered one of these scholarships will also be eligible for a university bursary if they are in receipt of a full or partial Government maintenance grant.

5.9 The bursary and scholarship scheme is a new financial support scheme, introduced in September 2006, which uses additional funding from charging fees above the standard rate.

6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS

6.1 CCCU will make available the provision of clear and accessible information on the fees charged and the financial support available. We will work closely with the Students' Union to provide a student perspective on how best to communicate the information about university bursaries to prospective students.

6.2 Information on the fees to be charged for each programme and the bursaries will be published in the University's Prospectus and on the web site. This information will also be included with the 'offer pack' from the institution. In relation to the new arrangements for 2008/09, a holding statement will be put on the university web site indicating that this information is provisional and subject to approval.

6.3 A section in the University Prospectus (hard copy and online version) will detail the costs of studying at the University (including cost of living information and study costs). It will also identify the sources of financial support available through the bursary and scholarship schemes for those from low-income groups and information on the discretionary funding available through the Access to Learning fund.

6.4 The information from CCCU will be forwarded to the Aimhigher Project team to be placed alongside the information from other local HE providers in Kent and Medway. The Aimhigher websites and other Aimhigher events, aimed at increasing the progression of under-represented groups to HE, will be used as a means of informing parents, pupils, teachers and advice and guidance workers of the fee and bursary arrangements in place at CCCU.

7. OUTREACH WORK

7.1 A small amount of the additional income generated from charging variable tuition fees (up to £15,000 a year uplifted each year by 2.5% for inflation) will be used for outreach – specifically in the form of sending targeted information to local schools, colleges and communities about the deferred tuition fee arrangements and bursary schemes in place at the University. The use of such publicity constitutes activity which is additional to previous outreach activity and support.

7.2 There is perhaps less emphasis in this Agreement on ‘Outreach’ work than might be evident in the Agreements of some institutions because:

(i) Widening participation is central to the Mission and strategic priorities of the University and outreach work will continue to be funded from mainstream funding and HEFCE premium funding for widening participation, student retention and supporting students with disabilities. There are already several outreach activities in place at CCCU for raising awareness, aspirations and attainment in order to assist progression to HE and these will be developed in line with our revised Widening Participation and Student Retention Strategy. Outreach activities that will continue include: involvement in master classes, ambassador schemes, mentoring projects, facilitating school visits, summer school activity, involvement in Local Authority Compact schemes, assisting prospective students with the transition to HE through the provision of online pre-arrival information and study skills, and putting in place several post-entry support measures which encourage students from under-represented groups to apply and to be retained in HE (e.g. Disability Services, Student Study Support, Student Financial Support and Guidance etc). The University will also continue to work in partnership with other institutions on the development and provision of Foundation Degrees and on the development of locally available HE provision in areas of high deprivation and low HE participation (e.g. Thanet, Medway and Folkestone).

(ii) The Access Agreement will form a part of the University's overall Widening Participation and Student Retention strategy. It will be used to assist the attainment of Widening Participation strategic objectives such as the development of Foundation Degrees in partnership with FE Colleges, the development of vibrant student communities in areas of high deprivation (e.g. Thanet, Medway or Folkestone) and student retention.

(iii) In addition, CCCU is the lead institution for the Kent and Medway Aimhigher Project. This involves chairing the Area Steering Group, being the Area banker and providing a base for the central Aimhigher Project team. Much of CCCU's outreach activity will therefore continue to be closely aligned with the Aimhigher Project.

(iv) As identified in Section 4.1, in attracting applications from under-represented groups to CCCU, a significant proportion (30%) of the additional income generated from charging above the standard fee will be used to fund a bursary scheme for students from low and middle income groups.

8. OBJECTIVES AND MILESTONES

8.1 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Performance Indicator data (HESA, 2007) show CCCU to have maintained a relatively strong position in recruiting students from lower socio-economic groups (35.7% of young full time 'first' degree and 'other' under-graduate entrants are from NS SEC groups 4 – 7 compared to the median for all universities of 32% [Universities UK, 2007]). In charging higher tuition fees, the approach detailed in this Agreement is designed to minimise as far as possible the potential reduction in applications from students from low and middle income groups.

8.2 The milestones detailed in the following section set challenging and realistic targets to at least maintain and if possible to increase by 3% (over 3 years) the numbers of enrolled students from low and middle income groups.

8.3 Table to show base-line position and targets:

Funding Body	Base-line numbers for students from low and middle income groups⁴ (Year 1 F/T u/g students based on 2007/08 academic year)	3 Year Target Numbers	Annual milestones
HEFCE /TTA	Estimated 1531 new entrants on bursaries in 2007/08 (income bands up to £46,000)	+3% on 3 year total: Estimated 46 additional bursaried students over 3 years (over and above general growth expectation)	Estimated 15 additional new entrants on bursaries (income bands up to £49,305) for 2008/09 (over and above the general growth expectation)

9. INSTITUTIONAL MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

⁴ This group includes students in receipt of full and partial state funding. It also includes students in the borderline group (with family incomes of £37,425 – £46,000) who will be exempt (during 2007/08) from any state support.

9.1 Figures for the numbers of enrolled students in receipt of a bursary from CCCU will be reported on an annual basis to the Senior Management Team.

9.2 Annual reports on the overall numbers of students in receipt of full or partial state support and those in the 'borderline' income group (and hence in receipt of CCCU bursaries) will be produced to assess progress in relation to the targets and milestones identified above.

9.3 As part of the annual monitoring report for OFFA, CCCU will produce information to confirm that the commitments set out in the Agreement are being met and to show progress in relation to meeting the milestones identified above.