

## **Keele University Fair Access Agreement February 2005**

### **1. Proposed fees and bursaries**

- 1.1 As from the year 2006/7 Keele University intends to charge up to £3000 per year in respect of any course.
- 1.2 Keele University intends to spend at least 20% of additional fee income on the Bursaries and Outreach programmes.
- 1.3 All students will be informed of the cost of tuition fees in writing when they receive an offer of a place at Keele: this information will, of course, be available in pre-application promotional material from Keele, and on the web site. When students receive an offer of a place they will also be invited to identify those bursaries for which they would wish to be considered (see para 5.1).

### **2. Background**

- 2.1 Keele University has always occupied a distinct place in UK higher education. The University was founded on the principal of interdisciplinary education, sustained to this day through its Dual Honours two-subject degree programmes and first-year programme of additional, complementary modules. Although the demands of the student market, and the requirements of professional bodies, have led to the development of certain single honours programmes, 85% of Keele's current first-year students are taking Dual Honours programmes. Keele's mission statement states that the institution aspires to be the "UK's leading open, integrated, intellectual community"
- 2.2 Keele has taken the difficult decision to seek to charge the maximum allowed tuition fee for all of its degree courses. This decision took into account: Keele's success in widening participation; its extremely strong graduation rate and high graduate employment percentage; the high quality student experience that we offer; and the need to be able to invest in teaching facilities and in our campus environment. Put simply, we believe that the value we offer students, our package of financial support (see below) and the support available through mandatory bursaries and Government grants will allow all students to take advantage of Keele's distinctive education and student experience and ultimately to gain a personal and financial benefit from that education and experience.
- 2.3 In keeping with our distinctive student experience, and building on the success of our widening participation activity in increasing access to Keele, we have developed a portfolio of bursaries which spans: academic excellence, support for important work experience and study abroad opportunities, fostering of key WP links with partnership schools, and special support for medical students, those taking the new Foundation Year and for students from black and minority ethnic communities.

### **3. Widening Participation activity**

- 3.1 Keele is proud of its nationally recognised reputation for widening participation. Keele's widening participation work has been consistently categorised as "exemplary" by HEFCE and we also meet or exceed our HEFCE performance indicator benchmarks. In 2002 Keele was awarded the HEIST Gold Award for the innovative multi-media outreach project "Uniworld".
- 3.2 Independent analyses have recognised Keele's strengths in widening participation. The Higher has ranked us amongst its top twelve "Access Elite" universities and the Sunday Telegraph has identified Keele as the only one of its twelve UK "Ivy League" universities that is also socially inclusive.
- 3.3 Currently Keele receives some £1.062M HEFCE WP and Retention Grant. This money is used to fund both central activities, including permanent staff in our Widening Participation Unit and Learning Resource Centre, and centrally organised provision such as Keele's local access scheme, A2K. Academic departments receive funding pro-rata to student numbers which supports dedicated staff roles, such as disability support officers, and a wide range of awareness-raising and outreach events amongst under-represented groups, including taster days, master-classes and summer schools.
- 3.4 Keele has also attracted some £710K of external project funding, primarily through AimHigher (£450K) and Advantage West Midlands (£125K) for a range of projects aimed at raising awareness and promoting HE progression (e.g. "Without Limits", a DVD aimed at parents in deprived areas, and projects associated with mentoring, Asian students, rural learners and mature students). Included in the AimHigher Funding is approximately £100K for the largest Higher Education Summer School in the West Midlands.
- 3.5 Keele intends to invest a proportion of its additional tuition fee income in further outreach activities to reach those categories of students for whom our bursaries are aimed, and to provide guidance and support for them and their parents in making HE choices. We therefore would wish to invest in: guidance for students, teachers and parents, particularly on financial aspects of HE study; aspiration and awareness-raising events on medical education; residential campus experiences; and information for black and minority ethnic groups.

### **4. Eligibility for Bursaries**

- 4.1 Currently some 30% of our undergraduate students have their tuition fees paid in full by their Local Education Authority, and about another 20% receive partial support from the LEAs. We are assuming that this proportion of students entering Keele from 2006 would be eligible for full or partial support, and so would be eligible for additional bursary funding, according to the relevant criteria for each bursary.
- 4.2 Keele therefore anticipates that 500 students per year group will be eligible for the mandatory bursary, which will be awarded in the form of a £300 cash bursary. This will be paid to students after they have enrolled at Keele in their first year, and in subsequent years after the start date of the academic year, provided that they have re-registered with Keele.

- 4.3 In addition to this Keele University will offer in excess of 200 non-mandatory bursaries per year. Many of these schemes will offer the bursary for each year of study, or for as long as the student engages with any relevant related activity *e.g.* the work experience bursary. The value of the bursaries ranges from £500 to £4000. The bursary scheme calculation is based on anticipated entry in 2006 and includes details about the number of years' duration for each award. It is anticipated that most bursary award schemes will demonstrate levels of growth.
- 4.4 A substantial number of the non-mandatory bursaries will be targeted at specific groups of students in order to ensure that recruitment from these is protected and enhanced. Keele University will identify its WP-bursary-eligible cohorts principally by the use of postcode analysis. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) techniques will be used in order to identify eligible students by use of multiple deprivation indices. This will enable the university to manipulate datasets to include additional target groups, for example those individuals from rurally deprived areas in the immediate locality, particularly Staffordshire and Shropshire.
- 4.5 The assessment of students for bursaries will depend upon the type of bursary. Academic excellence bursaries will be awarded when A-level or equivalent results are available, although for the WP-specific bursaries the candidate's personal statement, reference and any extenuating circumstances will also be taken into account. This latter process parallels that of the University's Charter Scholarship scheme for international students. We believe that students should not be made an academic conditional offer for a bursary that would be higher than the conditional offer for general entry to the course: this would confuse and concern students. The rural, BME and Foundation year bursaries will be awarded after the student has been made an offer of a place (see 5.1). Other bursaries will become available to students after they start their course, and they will be evaluated for these, for example, alongside the interview process for the work experience or mentorship *i.e.* there will not be a separate process. Details of how students will be identified for the bursaries are given in section 5.

## 5. Bursary schemes and allocation

- 5.1 Every student made a conditional or unconditional offer from Keele is sent a pack of information and an invitation to visit the University. From 2006 this pack will include details of the tuition fees and of all the bursaries available to students, and a reply slip on which students can indicate those bursaries for which they believe they are eligible and for which they would wish to be considered. For the rural, Foundation Year and Black and Minority Ethnic bursaries, students will be asked to supply a brief supporting statement against the criteria for the award of the relevant bursary. **We would aim, for these bursaries, to have decisions made, and bursary offers confirmed in writing, before the date (determined by UCAS) by which students need to make a decision on their offers of places. Students will then be able to take the financial support into account when selecting their universities.**
- 5.2 Students will only be able to hold one bursary based on academic excellence *i.e.* one of the bursaries in 5.3, 5.4 or 5.6. Aside from this, students in receipt of full state support for their studies (full grant) can hold any number of

bursaries. Students in receipt of partial state support can hold up to £5000 worth of bursaries in any one year.

**A *Bursaries for students who demonstrate academic excellence:***

***Academic Excellence (General Scheme) - £4000 for each academic year***

- 5.3 Keele is offering a number of bursaries to students who demonstrate academic excellence. This scheme is open to all students, but we expect that some 20 students from our target widening participation groups would receive these bursaries.

***Allocation process:*** When A-level or equivalent results are available, the cases of the highest achievers will be evaluated by a panel and the top ranked will receive a bursary for each year of study.

***Academic Excellence (WP student scheme) - £2000 for each academic year***

- 5.4 There are 50 bursaries for academic excellence in any subject, based on Key Stage 5 attainment, for students from widening participation backgrounds. These differ from the general scheme in that students' excellence will be judged in the context of their academic and social situation. For instance, many students from widening participation backgrounds take vocational A-levels, where national results show that achieving high grades is proportionately less likely than for traditional subjects.

***Allocation process:*** eligible students will be identified by postcode analysis and will be told in writing that they are eligible for this bursary and that this will be judged on academic achievement and motivation for study. This will be evaluated when A-level or equivalent results are available. All eligible students' cases will be evaluated by a panel and the top 50 will receive a bursary for each year of study.

- 5.5 The University also offers Mathematics Scholarships for high achieving students who enter the single honours Mathematics degree at Keele. These Scholarships provide £1000 over three years but as they are very specific we have not included them in our financial investment from additional fee income.

**B *Bursaries for students who come from backgrounds with little or no tradition of higher education***

***Partnership Schools bursaries - £500 for each academic year***

- 5.6 Building on existing arrangements and the University's access scheme A2K, Keele has developed a partnership agreement in order to develop closer relationships between the university and local schools and colleges (targeted according to widening participation criteria). Initially, 30 bursaries will be allocated to partnership school students for each year of study. These bursaries will be awarded to students whom their school/college believes are highly motivated and able, and where additional funding is justified.

***Allocation process:*** each school/college will be able to nominate up to three students for the Partnership bursary. These students must have demonstrated good academic ability and motivation to study: other relevant information can include sports/drama/other arts work, community or

school/college work or responsibilities, or alert us to particular family/social circumstances which would benefit from additional funding. This evaluation will be carried out for students who hold Keele as their Firm choice of university, and will be offered to successful students before they take their A-levels or equivalent.

***Rural bursaries - £500 reduction in cost of on-campus accommodation per year***

- 5.7 The university recognises that there are areas of deprivation that are not in receipt of the levels of government funding allocated to inner city areas. Accordingly, 20 bursaries will be allocated for rural learners in 2006 in order that they can live on Keele campus and so take full advantage of Keele's learning environment. These bursaries will principally be promoted through the Widening Participation Unit's rural AimHigher project working in Staffordshire and Shropshire, although other rural learners will be eligible. Rural bursaries will be available for each year of study.

***Allocation process:*** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for this bursary (see para 5.1) will have their eligibility checked by postcode analysis and then their applications considered by a panel. These bursaries will be awarded to students who can demonstrate that they would be unable to attend university without residence; we will also look at UCAS form personal statements for evidence of motivation to study.

***Black and Minority Ethnic bursaries - £1000 for each year of study***

- 5.8 Fifteen BME students will be awarded bursaries for each year of study. Priority will be given to those who become involved in Keele's BME outreach activities in the local area.

***Allocation process:*** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for a BME bursary (see para 5.1) will have their eligibility checked by postcode analysis and then their applications considered by a panel. We would expect to offer half of the bursaries to BME students involved in our local outreach work, basing these decisions on our knowledge of their particular circumstances and on their motivation to study. The remainder of the bursaries will be awarded to students who demonstrate need through their supporting statement.

***Undergraduate Medical Education bursaries - £500 for each of the first four years of the course***

- 5.9 Keele will allocate 8 bursaries to medical students from non-traditional backgrounds. This policy will support the university's commitment to Fair Access to medical education. These will be paid for the first four years of study at medical school, as additional support is available for the fifth and final year of this course.

***Allocation process:*** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for this bursary (see para 5.1) will have their eligibility checked by postcode analysis and then their applications considered by a panel. Bursaries will be awarded to students whose location has the highest deprivation indices (as measured by GIS).

## **C Students taking advantage of Keele's Foundation Year**

### ***Foundation Year bursaries - £500 for the Foundation Year***

- 5.10 Foundation Year (FY) course cohorts contain some of the largest concentrations of non-traditional students. This factor, combined with the cost of a four-year course, and Keele's commitment to develop additional access routes into the university, have led to 20 bursary places being allocated to FY students. The FY bursary will be offered for the Foundation Year only.

**Allocation process:** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for this bursary (see para 5.1) will have their eligibility checked by postcode analysis and then their applications considered by a panel. These bursaries will be awarded to students who can demonstrate that the Foundation Year is the most appropriate route for their entry into higher education.

## **D Students looking for work or study abroad experience**

### ***Work-based bursaries – £500/£1000 for years 1 and 2***

- 5.11 Keele has a strategic commitment to provide graduates for jobs which are important to the West Midlands but where suitably qualified candidates are currently in short supply. However, non-traditional students are less likely to enter graduate-level employment; research undertaken in the Widening Participation Unit at Keele has identified lack of confidence as a major contributor to the under-attainment of students from non-traditional backgrounds. Keele aims to address some of the difficulties that such students face during and after university by providing bursaries with a work experience element. For example, the recipients will be placed in local state schools, Primary Care Trusts, and administrative offices within the University.
- 5.12 The work-experience bursaries will be worth £500 from Keele but we anticipate that at least 50% will receive a further £500 match funded by LEA and PCT partners. All work-experience bursaries will be offered to students for Year 1 and 2 of their degree programmes to allow Year 3 to be devoted to degree studies.

**Allocation process:** students will apply for these bursaries after they have enrolled at Keele, and will be interviewed to ensure that they are suitable for the placement.

### ***Study abroad bursaries - £500 for the study abroad year/semester***

- 5.13 In the interest of allowing all students access to the full range of academic experiences, and indeed not to deter students from applying to courses where study abroad is a compulsory element, 15 bursaries will be offered for the year in which study abroad takes place (usually Year 2).

**Allocation process:** students will be selected for this bursary when they apply for study abroad. Students from the poorest backgrounds will be given priority.

***Widening Participation mentoring bursaries - £1000 for each year of mentoring***

- 5.14 Six widening participation bursaries per year will be used to employ mentors and ambassadors who will be used to inspire others from similar backgrounds and support Widening Participation activities at Keele.

***Allocation process:*** students will apply and be interviewed for mentorship placements: bursaries will be given to the students who demonstrate the greatest motivation and commitment to this work.

- 5.15 Additionally, Keele has entered into a new collaboration with The Year in Industry to use the facilities and expertise of that organisation to seek to secure work placements of a minimum of one academic year's duration during a student's course.
- 5.16 These developments, which we believe to be particularly distinctive, will enable students to learn new skills and gain confidence, so increasing their employability.

**E Contingency bursaries**

- 5.17 Twenty-five bursaries will be allocated on a flexible basis according to demand based on the above categories, as at this stage we are estimating the likely number of bursary-eligible students for each scheme.

**6. Outreach Activity**

- 6.1 Keele intends to invest some of its additional fee income in further widening participation activity, concentrating in particular those groups who would ultimately be eligible for a Keele bursary.

***Key Stage 3***

- 6.2 The university is committed to providing 120 places for Key Stage 3 students attending an extended 'university experience' day as part of the 'UniWorld' higher education information programme. The day visit will include academic, social and progression-based activities and will complement the nationwide CD ROM produced by Keele with HEFCE innovations funding in 2001. Some of the additional fee income may be used to update this new media resource.

***Key Stage 4***

- 6.3 Keele will offer a visit day experience for 120 Key Stage 4 students to complement the Futureproof CD ROM of higher education information. This new media resource builds on the initial information provided by UniWorld but now encourages students to focus on GCSE attainment and post-16 educational choice. Keele is also committed to providing at least one large scale residential with over 120 places for Key Stage 4 or 5 students (dependent upon the level of provision available through other projects, e.g. Higher Education Summer School students may require a follow-up event in Year 12).
- 6.4 The Undergraduate Medicine and other health-related academic departments will provide an input into the Key Stage 4 activities, notably the two large residential programmes: the AimHigher-funded HE Summer School for 140

Year 11 students drawn from the region, and the Stoke-on-Trent LEA funded Six Towns Project for 480 Year 11 students from Stoke-on-Trent.

### ***Key Stage 5***

- 6.5 A local schools' partnership will be established for state schools and colleges with low participation rates, all of whom will be invited to be part of the Key Stage 5 passport scheme 'A2K'. A2K is a generic web-based higher education resource that provides all students with a structured framework for considering higher education choices and going through the research and application process appropriately. The activities are presented as a "passport" and those students who subsequently apply to Keele can earn up to 30 UCAS Tariff points from these activities, which will count towards the achievement of a conditional offer from Keele. In order to support sixth form students and provide additional information about managing their finances over the next crucial few years of change, Keele will use some of the additional fee income to provide an information event for partnership schools and colleges, a teacher/Connexions adviser training day on higher education choice and application and additional web-based resources. Keele aims to reach a minimum of 400 students through A2K each year, regardless of their intended university destination.
- 6.6 In the interests of fair access, Keele University will encourage non-traditional students to enter its most prestigious courses. Each year a medical and health event will be offered to 180 Key Stage 3 students, and Keele will fund 20 places for non-traditional students to attend the Keele-based Royal Medical Society conferences for Key Stages 4 and 5. Keele will also offer a Year 12 Medical Summer School for at least 20 students, which will focus on entry requirements, application and interview techniques and course taster sessions.

### ***Black and Minority Ethnic (BME)***

- 6.7 Research has identified certain BME groups as being under represented in higher education but having good numbers in further education. We will work with specific groups of students in FE colleges in the region to improve continuation rates into higher education. The project will involve mentoring, group work, and community links and will be supplemented by a new media resource that will be developed in 2007/8. The BME coordinator will also facilitate the inclusion of under-represented minority ethnic students in the full range of outreach activity beyond the BME-specific project.

### ***The Schools' Partnership***

- 6.8 Keele will establish partnership arrangements with 50 secondary schools and colleges, which will foster close links between Keele and the community and ensure that students from widening participation backgrounds in these schools will have preferential access to our outreach activity
- 6.9 As indicated above there will be bursaries for students to support outreach activities. At least 12 local schools with lower than average GCSE results will benefit from having student mentors placed with them.

### ***Awareness-raising and guidance for gatekeepers***

- 6.10 Students will receive information about bursaries through a number of routes. The initial source of information will be through the University's undergraduate prospectus and a special web site, but there will also be detailed sessions, and one-to-one guidance, on student finance at Open Days and Visit Days.



An information leaflet on the costs and benefits of higher education, and on Keele's bursary programme, will be provided for parents. The A2K programme, including the A2K event and web resource, will ensure that financial issues are explained to prospective students. We shall also hold a conference at Keele for Connexions advisers and local teachers to update them on student financial issues.

## **7. Monitoring**

- 7.1 The 2005/6 entrants to Keele will provide the baseline for monitoring increases in our recruitment from under-represented groups in Higher Education. We are not taking the baseline back further, partly because we have already seen an increase in recruitment from target groups and it is therefore appropriate to use the most recent position, and partly because the university's student records system was not robust before the implementation of the new SCIMS system this year.
- 7.2 We are seeking a minimum improvement of 10% per annum on recruitment from black and minority ethnic groups, and a minimum 5% increase in recruitment over the first two years in each of the following: mature students, students from rural areas and students from target locations identified by GIS deprivation indices. We would then expect these student numbers to grow at 3-5% per annum.
- 7.3 There will be an undertaking to monitor compliance with the agreement and progress towards milestones annually, with a full report being sent to the University Council, and OFFA as required.

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### ***Brief description of Keele-specific projects***

*UniWorld* is a Key Stage 3 project that uses National Curriculum lessons (PHSE) to introduce Higher Education through a networkable CD Rom in a fun and age-appropriate format. Follow-up activities include a web club and university visit programme.

*Futureproof* is the Key Stage 4 continuation resource for *UniWorld*, and uses the same medium. It provides a more in-depth higher education experience and focuses on career and educational options. It will also have an associated university-based experience.

*A2K* is a generic advice and guidance package for Key Stage 5 with the aim of guiding all students through the higher education application process thoroughly and thoughtfully. The scheme uses a pocket-sized 'passport' that is supported by in-depth web guidance. Students who do apply to Keele may earn up to 30 UCAS Tariff points by working through the passport. Keele aims to provide associated support events for students and gatekeepers.