



# Access Agreement

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### ***Education, Learning and Skills Mission***

To be the local, regional and major national centre of excellence for education and training in the provision of learning and skills to the land-based and rural sector community.

### ***Accessibility Statement***

Sparsholt College Hampshire will assess individual learner needs based on curriculum requirements and wherever possible make reasonable adjustments to enable students to study at the College and succeed on their own course.

# SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE

## Access Agreement

This access agreement sets out the fee limits for higher education courses at Sparsholt College Hampshire for 2006/7 – 2008/9. It describes the amount of additional fee income to be spent on access measures and how this income will be spent in order to safeguard and maintain fair access.

### A. Fee limits

The maximum fee limit for full time students on all higher education courses at Sparsholt College Hampshire will be £2400 with annual inflationary rises.

### B. Amount of additional fee income to be spent on access measures

The College will have a 'Widening Participation Fund' of 25% of the additional fee income. This means that in 2006/7 with an estimated 140 first year students, the Widening Participation Fund will be £42,000; this will increase over a three-year period to £90,000 at the maximum fee limit.

### C. Financial Support for students

The main target groups for financial support to help widen participation and increase access to higher education include those students who receive full or partial state support, i.e. all students in receipt of part or all of the Higher Education Maintenance Grant. This information is provided by the Student Loan Company's online eligibility checker which is available to the College.

Sparsholt College Hampshire has a high proportion of students receiving state support, reflecting the effort made to widen participation to date. Currently 40% of our full time higher education students receive full state support for tuition fees and 10% receive partial state support for tuition fees.

All full time UK students who receive full or partial state support will receive a flat-rate cash bursary. The level of the Bursary Fund will be 66 % of the Widening Participation Fund. Therefore in 2006/7 the fund would be £28,000 increasing to £60,000 in 2008/9 at the maximum fee limit and present student numbers.

The minimum bursary award for each eligible student will be set at £200. However, in 2006/7 the bursary award for each student would be £384 at the maximum fee limit, based on an estimated 140 students of which 73 students are eligible for support.

The Widening Participation Fund will be subject to annual inflationary increases in line with the fees. Therefore the Bursary Fund will increase proportionally.

Sparsholt College Hampshire would continue to provide financial support through the Access to Learning Fund whereby students are assessed individually, based on criteria laid down by DfES.

#### D. Provision of information to students

Information for students on the fees and financial support available will be detailed in the College prospectus and on the College web site. Case studies will be used to illustrate the aggregate costs of their tuition if they are successful in gaining a place. Illustrations of the net costs of studying on their courses will be provided, including estimates on the cost of living for students living on and off campus.

The prospectus will also advise prospective students of the targeted support that will be given to them to study on Higher Education courses and achieve their qualifications. Sparsholt College prides itself on its high level of academic and pastoral support given to students.

Admissions, Course Tutors and the Marketing team will provide information regarding the fee level and financial support available at Careers Events, Taster Days and Interview Days. This will be in addition to the many off site marketing events attended throughout the year.

Information regarding the fees and the financial support available through the College will be sent to the students with their offer of a place. The Student Handbook, provided to all students, will include information about the fees, financial support and who to ask for more information.

The Registry Student Finance Team provides guidance to students on the fees and financial support available. The team are happy to discuss financial arrangements before starting a course and are available on site for students whilst on their course.

#### E. Outreach work

The College is already committed to widening participation and has worked with Aim Higher on a number of projects since 2000. In 2003/4 the total value of Aim Higher projects was circa £25,000.

The Outreach Fund will be 33% of the Widening Participation Fund, therefore in 2006/7 the Outreach Fund will be £14,000 increasing to

£30,000 in 2008/9 at the maximum fee limit and present student numbers.

The existing College commitment to Aim Higher will be enhanced by an additional 25% of the Outreach Fund to promote activities that encourage participation in higher education in the land based industries by disadvantaged groups in Hampshire and the south of England.

It is anticipated that a significant proportion (75%) of the Outreach Fund will be invested in a Higher Education Outreach Officer who will further enhance the College's commitment to widening participation in education and training. Key aspects of their work will include:

- Assistance with development of an Access Programme
- Develop activities to raise the profile of HE in schools and develop school-college consortium arrangements

Target groups for Outreach are students from disadvantaged backgrounds including:

- low incomes;
- ethnic minorities;
- mature students returning to study with non-traditional entry qualifications;
- students with disabilities

Currently the College marketing team works with schools and colleges in Hampshire to encourage participation in education and training in the land based industries.

National statistics show that the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth have a high percentage of disadvantaged families and currently outreach work is very limited in those areas. The ODPM has released the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (an update to the 2000 Index) that ranks Southampton as 96th out of the 354 Local Authorities in England, where 1 equals the most deprived.

Portsmouth has a number of neighborhoods that have been allocated priority status and are the focus of Neighborhood Renewal activity in Portsmouth. These neighborhoods were identified as having the lowest quality of life (for example in terms of income levels, educational failure, ill health and child poverty) according to detailed statistics from the Government's latest Index of deprivation.

As a result Sparsholt College will provide a dedicated Higher Education Outreach Officer to promote the Higher Education opportunities at the College.

The Higher Education Outreach Officer would be expected to work with the following numbers of establishments in the Southampton and Portsmouth areas:

- 4 schools with sixth forms
- 9 further education and sixth form colleges

This will be in addition to existing outreach work and marketing with other sixth form colleges including Peter Symonds in Winchester, Cricklade in Andover and Queen Mary's in Basingstoke. We would also expect the HE Outreach Officer to liaise with certain community groups in Portsmouth and Southampton to widen access to ethnic minority and disabled groups.

#### F. Milestones

The College will work towards the following milestones:

- Increase in the baseline proportion of financially disadvantaged students receiving full or partial state support at 40% by 5% by 2008/9
- Increase in the baseline proportion of higher education students from disadvantaged areas at 2% by 1% by 2008/9
- Maintenance of the baseline proportion of higher education students age 25+ at 48%
- Increase in the baseline proportion of higher education students from ethnic minorities at 0.7% by 0.3% by 2008/9
- Maintenance of the baseline proportion of disabled students on higher education courses at 13%

#### G. Institutional Monitoring Arrangements

Progress towards milestones will be monitored using internal College MIS procedures.

Progress will be reviewed through the college management team and reported tri-annually at the Academic and Quality Standards Board and annually reported to Governors.