

Loughborough University Access Agreement (revised July 2008)

1. Background and Context

Loughborough University's mission is:

- To increase knowledge and understanding through research which is internationally recognised
- To provide a high quality international educational experience with wide opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds which prepares our graduates for the global workplace
- To influence the economic and social development of individuals, business, professions and communities

We want our students to reach their full potential regardless of their background before joining the University. It follows that we are committed to ensuring that finance does not present a barrier to the admission and progression of students whilst recognising that we must secure sufficient resources to maintain the high standard of the student experience which we offer in partnership with Loughborough Students' Union.

The University is located adjacent to Loughborough, a prominent high-technology centre for the East Midlands, on an impressive 433 acre campus which is one of the largest in the UK. Our undergraduate degree programmes, many of which have been developed in partnership with employers, are characterised by a combination of relevance to employment and research-led teaching. The majority of courses offer a sandwich year opportunity enabling students to develop their skills further. Where applicable to the discipline, all degrees have received accreditation from the relevant professional body. The nature of many of our courses means that prior knowledge in certain subjects, e.g. mathematics or science, is often required for admission. Our teaching quality is rated amongst the highest nationally and our students have an outstanding record for employability.

The University's location and the distinctive nature of its degree programmes has resulted in an undergraduate student body that is predominately full-time, the majority of whom are young and living away from home. We recruit nationally accepting students from all parts of the United Kingdom. Loughborough is proud of its record for the admission of students from under-represented groups. Within the limits of the statistical significance of the data, we are already meeting or close to the relevant HESA benchmarks for socio-economic group, low participation neighbourhoods, mature students and students in receipt of Disability Allowance.

2. Proposed Fees for UK/EU students for the 2008/09 academic year

All full-time undergraduate programmes	£ 3,145
Science & Engineering Foundation Programme (HEFCE-funded)	£ 3,145
Sandwich placement year	£ 625
Full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	£ 3,145

The above fees will be increased each year for all relevant students in line with the government approved inflation factor.

3. Loughborough University Bursary Scheme

The objectives of our bursary scheme are as follows:

- To minimise the financial barriers to entry and progression at Loughborough
- To ensure we retain the proportion of students we currently recruit from under-represented socio-economic groups and low participation neighbourhoods
- To help us to increase the proportion of students from these under-represented groups by the 2010 intake bearing in mind that significant growth in our undergraduate population is not planned
- To aim for a small increase in the existing proportion of mature students amongst our undergraduates

Our bursary scheme for all eligible UK full-time undergraduate entrants from 2008/09 will be as follows. Bursaries of twice the standard value will continue to be offered to mature students. Our experience to date of administering our Access to Learning Funds indicates this is a key group in need of increased financial assistance at Loughborough.

Annual Loughborough Bursary

Household Income	Under 21 on Entry	21 or over on entry	PGCE
Up to £ 25,000	£ 1,360	£ 2,720	£310
£ 25,001 to £ 34,750	£ 630	£ 1,260	0

The bursary scheme approved for 2008/09 is more generous than its predecessor in two key respects:

- The base-line income threshold has been raised to £25,000 in line with a decision taken by the Government in relation to its HE maintenance grant, a significant uplift compared to the expected figure for 2008/09 (£18,450)
- The replacement of six income tiers by two will increase the value of awards made to students with household incomes at the upper end of the range

The new scheme will apply to new entrants in the 2008/09 academic year. Bursary holders who first entered the University in 2006 and 2007 will remain on the previous scheme with an inflation adjustment being made to income thresholds and bursary values. Arrangements for 2009/10 are under review.

We have designed our scheme bearing in mind that our location means that our predominately young undergraduate population has no option but to move away from home with the increase in living costs which this inevitably entails. We are particularly concerned that increased tuition fees do not deter our current mature entrants from low income backgrounds, for many of whom Loughborough represents the only practical opportunity for higher education.

Our ability to recruit mature undergraduate students will always be modest given our location and subject range (e.g. we do not offer programmes in health and social care which attract significant numbers of mature returners). These factors also restrict the viability of offering our programmes on a part-time basis. Currently the University is not meeting its benchmark for the recruitment of this group of undergraduate students and has introduced,

therefore, a number of initiatives to increase recruitment from this under-represented group. It is known that mature students can face more acute financial challenges than other groups, and one of the University's initiatives, therefore, has been to offer higher value bursaries to mature entrants who satisfy the eligibility conditions. The University believes that this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The bursaries will not be payable in the sandwich year, if taken, and students from the Channel Islands and Isle of Man will not be eligible. We will use information derived from Local Authority assessments of income to determine bursary eligibility. In 2008/09, bursaries will be paid by BACS transfer into student bank accounts.

The University has also established a non means-tested care leaver's bursary for non-mature students, additional to its standard bursary scheme. The care leaver's award will amount to £1500 for each year of study apart from a sandwich placement year in which there will be no award. The award made to a student in his/her first year of study will consist of £750 from the University and £750 from the Frank Buttle Trust. In subsequent years, the total cost will be met by the University. A care leaver's bursary of £310 will be available to PGCE students.

In addition to the above means-tested bursaries we offer merit-based entry scholarships for particularly able students in a number of science and engineering subject areas.

4. Provision of Information to Students

The University recognises the need to expand its current financial guidance, support and administration arrangements for prospective and current students which operate as a partnership between central University services and the Students' Union. A Bursaries and Scholarships Service (BSS) has been established to implement this undertaking. Clear, comprehensive information is produced in both printed and electronic form covering:

- Total tuition costs for prospective students
- Estimated study and living costs, including sample budgets
- A comprehensive summary of University support including bursaries, scholarships, sponsorship and hardship funds, eligibility criteria etc.
- A brief summary of state support with cross references (e.g. to DfES, AimHigher, Student Loans Company websites etc.)
- References to other possible sources of income, e.g. employment (including our own outreach activities, see Section 7), charitable trusts etc.

The material is illustrated with a case study and tailored versions have been created for prospective students and parents. It is integrated with current outreach and recruitment information and is used pro-actively in both central and departmental outreach, student recruitment and admissions activities. In addition to the creation of web and paper-based information materials, the BSS also provides accessible, confidential advice for individual prospective and current students through the student's choice of medium (telephone, email, face-to face).

The University has purchased the full services of the Student Loans Company (SLC) to determine the value of means-tested awards and to make payments into student bank accounts. The BSS liaises closely with the SLC in the operation of this process. In addition, the unit co-ordinates the University's Access to Learning Fund and other sources of financial assistance.

5 Summary of Current Outreach Work

Outreach work at Loughborough is delivered through a partnership between the central widening participation unit, our Faculties, academic and student support departments and Loughborough Students' Union. We work closely with the other Leicestershire universities, now within the wider framework of AimHigher. We also contribute to aspiration-raising in deprived areas of East London via our leadership of the Dagenham New Technology Institute project. Activity has grown significantly since 2000 and to date Loughborough has mainly targeted the following:

- Local students with no family history of HE
- Local students from lower socio-economic classes and low participation neighbourhoods
- Mature students
- Minority Ethnic Groups
- Students with disabilities
- Increasing achievement and interest in mathematics, science and engineering as well as additional mathematics support for our current students
- Using our unique reputation and facilities for sport to promote the attractiveness of higher education

The above targeting aims to use our distinctive strengths whilst placing emphasis on groups which are significantly under-represented nationally in higher education as well as the particular challenges faced by the University. We are aware of the recent guidance issued by HEFCE in relation to targeting and we are working with our partners in schools and colleges with respect to its implementation.

Scale of Current Activities (2006/07)

- Over 2,800 prospective students and their parents have been involved
- More than 50 different schools/colleges have been partners in these activities
- Over 100 current University students have been involved in activities, acting as role models and talking to target groups about their experiences as a university student
- 6 events focussed on demystifying science each involving 30 Year 8 and 9 students
- The Widening Access through Sport project involves 400 students in an ongoing programme of activities utilising both campus facilities and staff expertise
- Commitment to the AimHigher initiative has continued, with a high level involvement in the Leicestershire activities (approximately 2,500 students have been worked with through this initiative) and further involvement on a regional level with Science Summer School activities (over 450 students in five years).

A detailed summary document of the Widening Participation activities that have taken place is produced each year for the internal monitoring purposes.

6 Under-Represented Groups at Loughborough and Milestones

As noted in section 1, within the statistical significance of the data, Loughborough is close to its HESA benchmarks for admission of young full-time undergraduate students from less advantaged socio-economic groups (23.5% in 2002) and low participation neighbourhoods (9.2% in 2002). However, over the years our performance has almost always been slightly below the benchmarks and of course the groups concerned remain under-represented nationally in higher education. In addition, UCAS data indicate that we attract slightly fewer ethnic minority student applications and acceptances than the national average for the subjects we offer. We need to undertake further analysis to understand the origin of these differences and we are conscious that there is significant variation in representation of different ethnic groups in higher education nationally.

Loughborough therefore recognises its responsibility to contribute further to raising achievement and aspirations for higher education. In view of the above, our strategy for additional outreach continues to be:

- To maintain intakes of students from under-represented groups at their current levels despite the introduction of tuition fees
- To aim for modest increases in our performance indicators for students from under-represented groups by the end of the Access Agreement period
- To increase our outreach activities aimed primarily at general aspiration and achievement-raising locally, and to a lesser extent nationally, through expansion of our central widening participation team and increased student involvement

The above aspirations and our milestones need to be considered in the context of the following:

- The considerable uncertainty surrounding the impact of variable tuition fees on demand for places at different institutions and for different subject areas.
- That nationally there has been only limited progress in increasing participation by students from less advantaged social classes and from low participation neighbourhoods since 1998/99.
- That it is most practical for our staff and students to engage with outreach activities in our local, largely non-urban, area. This inevitably limits the amount of work we can undertake with some groups under-represented nationally (e.g. African-Caribbean males). We are, however, taking forward initiatives in East and South (Inner) London, an area identified as a target.

Loughborough will maintain its investment of a proportion of its tuition fee income in additional outreach work as well as in its bursary scheme. Although we believe the majority of the impact of the work we undertake will contribute to increased participation in higher education generally rather than specifically at Loughborough, we have set ambitious but, we hope, realistic milestones for increasing further the number of students we admit from under-represented groups. In setting these targets, we are mindful of the challenging national context and that raising aspirations and achievement is a long term project for us all. Assuming current levels of other sources of funding for widening participation remain stable, we estimate that our additional expenditure on outreach activities will be in the region of £284k per year by 2007/08.

(i) Young full-time first degree entrants

Indicator	2002 Intake*	2006 Intake	2008 Intake	2010 Intake
% From socio-economic groups 4-7	23.5	24.5	25	26
% From low participation neighbourhoods	9.2	9.5	10.0	10.5

* HESA Performance Indicators, Table T1a, September 2004

(ii) Mature full-time first degree entrants

Indicator	2002 Intake*	2006 Intake	2008 Intake	2010 Intake
% of Intake	5	5.3	5.7	6
% No previous HE & from low participation neighbourhoods	12	14	15	16

*HESA Performance Indicators, Table T2a, September 2004 – rolling average of previous three years used as small numbers lead to major data fluctuations

(iii) Participation of Students in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

Indicator	2002/03*	2006/07	2008/09	2010/11
% undergraduate population receiving DSA	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.0

*HESA Performance Indicators, Table T7, September 2004

(iv) Ethnic Minority Students – Applications and Acceptances

	2003 Intake*	2007 Intake	2010 Intake
Ethnic Minority applications as % total	12%	13%	14%
Ethnic Minority students accepted as % of those applying	19%	20%	21%

* UCAS Data for Loughborough University

7 Plans for Additional Outreach Work

Our plans for additional activities will continue to focus on the groups identified in Section 5 above. We will continue to extend the scale of some initiatives and we will consolidate those which have been introduced within the last few years (* highlighted below) drawing on recognised good practice.

Activity	2004/05	2006/07	2007/08	2010/11
University Experience Days	11	13	15	15
Shadowing Events	2	3	4	4
Taster Sessions	3	4	5	5
Mentoring (number of relationships)	110	150	200	200
*Students in Classrooms	2 schools, 10 students	5 schools, 25 students	10 schools, 50 students	10 schools, 50 students
*Students Helping Students Scheme, number trained and working with WP team	30	60	100	100
*Parents & Families Events	2	4	6	6
*Primary Schools as Partners	1	3	5	5
Focussed activities with FE Colleges	1	3	5	5
Access to HE through Sport (on campus activities)	3	6	10	10
Number of prospective students & parents involved	2,200	2,800	3,500	3,500
Number of schools/colleges Involved	45	53	60	60

Although many of the above activities are focussing on local students, there is a national dimension to this work, particularly relating to subject-specific issues. This is key for students who would not be able to access a particular subject area within their locality. Activities are either accessible to, or specifically target, mature students, minority ethnic groups and students with disabilities as appropriate. We are encouraging our own University students from these groups to participate in assisting with events as well as those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds and low participation neighbourhoods. A significant proportion of our additional expenditure on outreach activities is in the form of payments to students for their contribution, representing an additional source of income, predominately (we estimate at least 60%) for our students from under-represented groups. We develop new initiatives in partnership with other stakeholders and in response to national developments in good practice. All new activities are monitored and adapted as necessary and there is also scope for developing other activities not previously mentioned, for example, if a school requests a particular event.

Measurement of Impact

A variety of approaches are used to measure the impact of our outreach work, including the following:

- Evaluations are conducted following each event. Recommendations and comments are taken on board for future activities
- Establishing a series of events will allow direct follow-up with students and their teachers. The continued work will also allow pre- and post-event evaluations to be undertaken and some level of measurement of the impact on opinions and knowledge of further and higher education. The National AimHigher Initiative is also looking at the issue of measurement of impact and therefore we may need to implement national schemes of evaluation at a later date.
- Tracking of students is taking place. Data on the students attending events is being collected (subject to data protection regulations) and their progress throughout the educational system is being monitored (with assistance from schools, colleges and Connexions and Aimhigher East Midlands)
- Monitoring of University student data is being maintained, focusing on admissions, progression and retention issues.

8 Monitoring Arrangements

A first report (for 2006/07) was submitted to OFFA in the format requested.

This report was considered initially by the University's Student Recruitment Team which is chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching. It was then formally approved within the University by Senate and Council

This Agreement was originally approved by the Council of Loughborough University on 21 December 2004. This version was approved by the Chair of Council on behalf of Council on 3 August 2008.