

Access Agreement 2009/10 Onwards (Summer 2008)

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 also describes the variety of initiatives in place and future plans designed to widen access further during the next four years.

2. Fee Limits

- 2.1 Oxford Brookes charges the maximum allowable undergraduate fee for home students. For 2009/10 this fee will be £3,225. 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 section of our website <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying/finance>. Students are advised that the fee will rise with inflation in line with regulations published by the Government each year.

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. It is also our intention to enhance the current funding allocated to students who might not meet the minimum income threshold for eligibility but who nevertheless can demonstrate financial hardship. In these circumstances small allocations can be made from the Financial Hardship Fund which is described below in section 4 in greater detail.
- 3.4 The level of bursary an Oxford Brookes student might be entitled to will be assessed according to family income using the assessment already undertaken by the LEA or other relevant body and communicated to the University via the SLC. These bursaries will range from £150 to £1,500. The bands for 2009/10 are described in the table below. These bands will change each year to take account of inflation.

Residual Household Income	Bursary
<=£4,999	£1,800
£20,999	£1,560
£26,999	£1,050
£27,999	£750
£28,999	£750
£29,999	£750

£30,999	£600
£31,999	£600
£32,999	£450
£33,999	£450
£34,999	£150
£35,999	£150
>=£36,999	£0

3.5 Oxford Brookes 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 – through accommodation or living expenses or in another way, entirely at their discretion.

3.6 Part-time students are charged only a proportion of the tuition fee and are, therefore, not included within the bursary scheme.

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 We have built upon the existing funding available through the Access to Learning Fund and the Emergency Fund by committing additional funds to be allocated to students who can demonstrate financial hardship but who may not have qualified for a full university bursary. Students who have received no bursary, a bursary at a defined minimum level or less, or students who may have received a higher bursary but can demonstrate financial hardship will qualify for financial aid up to a maximum ceiling.

4.3 In addition to the bursary scheme, Oxford Brookes has expanded the funding available through the Hardship Fund. This will be aimed at supporting students who have already started courses at the University. The University has committed to a significant increase in overall funds available in support of students experiencing hardship.

4.4 Oxford Brookes has developed a scholarship scheme the first payments of which were be made in September 2007.

- Academic Excellence Scholarship

Applicants studying at a school or college of further education anywhere in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and who apply for an undergraduate course at Oxford Brookes will be considered for an academic excellence scholarship. The academic excellence scholarships are open to all applicants who are UK citizens, have been educated in the UK and are eligible for home tuition fees and home student support and who have selected Oxford Brookes University as their preferred university. The scholarship is awarded at a rate of £2,000 per annum for each year of a degree programme up to 4 years. Applicants must have achieved the highest grade in specified examinations. Full details can be found at:

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

- Community Scholarship

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 per annum for each year of the degree programme up to 4 years. Full details may be found at:

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

- 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

- 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 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 the Department for Education and Skills.
- 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 (see section 6.3.4) 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 website www.brookes.ac.uk 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. This funding is additional to bursary and other financial support and is derived from fee income. This additional spending enhances existing

outreach work which has been central to our recruitment policy for a number of years and extends initiatives already in place.

Increased spending has also enabled Oxford Brookes to fund new initiatives which it believes will attract a greater number of applicants from under-represented groups in higher education, particularly those from low social economic groups, ethnic minorities and poorly represented communities.

6.2 Target audiences

The approximate number of students potentially affected by outreach activity is 40,000. This figure is made up of the number of 16 – 18 years old pupils currently studying at target schools and further education institutions (FEIs), excluding level 5 target schools (see below).

In addition, Oxford Brookes works with approximately 4,000 pre-16 pupils on a variety of activities to raise aspirations to continue with their education.

There are 535 target schools and FEIs that Oxford Brookes primarily works with to raise aspirations and encourage applications. State schools make up 358 and the remaining 177 are FEIs. Target schools and FEIs were chosen based on criteria designed to identify potential to send students to Brookes – state schools, within two hours drive of the University, with sixth forms comprising more than 200 students and an average point score of 250-300.

The schools and FEIs are separated into four different levels, each assigned different amounts of support. An additional fifth level incorporates a further 403 institutions from Education Action Zones (EAZs) and Excellence Challenge areas not currently included in levels 1-4 defined below.

Level	Description	No. of schools & FEIs
1	AimHigher (Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire)	43
2	Oxfordshire schools and FEIs	19
3	Regional schools and FEIs within a two hour drive time	418
4	Non-independent schools and FEIs which don't fall into criteria but consistently send students to Brookes	55
Core target	Sub-total	535
5	EAZs and Excellence Challenge areas	403
All	Total	938

6.3 Enhancements to existing schemes

6.3.1 AimHigher (www.aimhigher.ac.uk)

Oxford Brookes, as the host institution, remains committed to the AimHigher initiative in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The initiative includes the following activities

Events	Target audience	Distribution
Higher Education Awareness Days (HEADs)	Future students	On campus - target FEIs (level 1)
Passport Year 9, 10 and 12	Future students	On campus - target schools (level 1)
Curriculum enrichment	Future students, local community	On campus - target schools & FEIs (level 1)
Science Challenge (in partnership with the University of Reading)	Future students	Year 9 pupils in target schools & FEIs (level 1)
Lego League	Future students	Years 8 & 9 pupils in target

		schools & FEIs (level 1)
Ementoring project (using Brookes undergraduates)	Future students	Year 10 & 11 pupils in Milton Keynes target schools & FEIs

6.3.2 Guaranteed Offer Scheme (GO)
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/undergraduate/facts/application>

The GO scheme was set up in 2003 to encourage Oxfordshire students from target schools and FEIs (level 2) to apply to Oxford Brookes University. Under the scheme, applicants who meet the typical course offers listed in the undergraduate prospectus will automatically receive a guaranteed offer of a place at the University.

6.3.3 Targeting under-represented groups

Oxford Brookes continues to provide targeted events for both pre and post-16 pupils. The events are designed to raise aspirations of pupils to remain in education and give a 'taste' of subjects available to them. An increasing number of events are held year on year. The following schemes will be undertaken in 2008/9:

Events	Target audience	Distribution
Taster sessions	Future students	On campus – Years 12 & 13 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-3)
Professor Fluffy (Primaries project)	Future students	On campus – Year 5 & 6 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-2)
Science Week	Future students	On campus – Years 9, 10 & 11 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-2)
Curriculum enrichment programme (STEM)	Future students	On campus – Years 10-13

6.3.4 Teachers' Information Pack
www.brookes.ac.uk/schoolsandcolleges/information_pack

Information for tutors has been produced by Oxford Brookes in the past. However, the Teachers' Information Pack is much more extensive than previous packs. The pack is designed to help teachers advise their students and parents on higher education. The 14 non-Brookes-specific fact-sheets in the pack can be photocopied as hand-outs for other staff, students and parents. An offer was also made to send staff and student ambassadors to local schools to give presentations on all aspects covered in the pack. These packs were sent to level 1-4 target schools and FEIs in October 2004 and have been continuously updated and sent annually since then.

6.3.5 Ethnic minority outreach work

The University engages with a variety of minorities including through Black History month, visits from groups of potential students and other programmes such as the Learning Communities Initiative. In addition a major study has been carried out in the past year on what barriers exist to young Asian women participating in HE. This research project has led to a number of recommendations which will be addressed in the coming year and has also meant significant engagement with the local Asian and Muslim communities.

6.4. New Outreach Activity

New activity is beginning regularly so the initiatives noted below only represent a small proportion of the total that Brookes has underway.

6.4.1 Aimhigher

Together with Oxford Brookes, Aimhigher is establishing several new initiatives in 2008 to raise aspirations of pupils to continue their education:

Events	Target audience	Distribution
Brookes Youth Summer University	Future students	Year 10-13 pupils in local area and London
The 2 Faces of Science	Future students	Year 10-13 pupils in local area

6.4.2 Associate College Partnership

Oxford Brookes University together with six FEIs comprise the Associate College Partnership (ACP). The aim of the Partnership is to make higher education even more accessible to all students who have the capability to do well. Long-term relationships with these colleges has enabled the sharing of best practice and provided students with greater options. The Partnership is underpinned by joint student number planning and aspiration raising. New outreach activity is planned for the coming year in these colleges with the extension of a pilot scheme to raise aspirations in college students – particularly those on “vocational” courses.

6.4.3 Targeting under-represented groups

Faith and Community groups are being used as a channel for IAG to under-represented groups. This includes Christian and Muslim faith groups, local Youth organisations and London boroughs (through their summer University programmes). In addition, through the major Learning Communities Initiative (LCI), which is a major outreach programme, many under-represented groups are being targeted for engagement with Brookes programmes, including mature students, BEM students, students with disabilities and others who, for whatever reason, have become disconnected with educational opportunities. This programme is backed up by promotional activities which include the marketing of subject days (tasters), the Summer Uni programme, courses which are not taught at A level. This entails promotional materials, programmes and an enhanced website.

6.4.4 Ethnic minority outreach work

Our programmes are this year to be supplemented by a new activity which springs from a research project carried out last year into the barriers facing young Asian women in aspiring to HE. This new activity aims to address those barriers and will seek to engage with a greater number of such women. The LCI (see 6.4.3) is also a major vehicle for reaching this group.

6.4.5 Oxfordshire Brookes Schools partnership

This is a new initiative to work with local schools to address issues including widening participation and staff development. The scheme involves a considerable amount of engagement with the University by students in years 10 through 13. These manifest themselves in subject-specific taster days, curriculum enrichment activities and mentoring by current students. The scheme was only launched recently and has sparked immediate interest from local schools. A student-centric conference is to be held in the course of the year with sixth form and University students participating, as well as staff from schools and HE. The main topic of the conference will be the development of Independent Study Skills (a real concern for VIth Form Heads in WP) and students’ approach to what is now a global world of work, and what this means in terms of employability. The programme is linked to the University Community Scholarship scheme which offers local students the opportunity to develop their study skills in year 12.

7 Improved learner support and experience

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

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

8 Milestones

- 8.1 Oxford Brookes believes that the primary criterion for measuring the success of its access measures is the percentage increases in enrolled students from state schools. We have considered the value of establishing our own milestones in relation to increasing the numbers of state school applications and enrolments and agreed that statistical milestones are important in order to maintain momentum in the creation of new access initiatives and the assessment of the effectiveness of such measures.
- 8.2 We also consider that statistical milestones should be realistic and achievable. Oxford Brookes is located in a prosperous region where the cost of living is higher than the national average and while the University attracts students from all regions of the UK, its traditional markets have been drawn from London, the Home Counties and the West Country. Increasing participation remains a challenge therefore and the University is placing considerable resources and effort into meeting its own milestones.
- 8.3 Using our 2004 baseline data of around 67%, in our original Access Agreement we established the objective of increasing state school participation to 75% by 2010.

The table below sets out original targets for participation by State School pupils, Ethnic Minorities and Low socio-economic groups. We are continuing to work towards these targets, with annual increases as shown below. The figures in brackets for 2006/7 are enrolled figures taken from the Access Agreement Monitoring Report 2006/7, figures for 2007/8 will be confirmed in the 2007/8 Monitoring Report.

Year	State school	Ethnic minorities	Low socio-economic groups
2006/07	68% (74%)	9% (10%)	21% (37%)
2007/08	68%	10%	21%
2008/09	70%	10%	22%
2009/10	72%	11%	23%
2010/11	75%	11%	23%

- 8.4 Oxford Brookes places considerable value on ethnic minority and lower socio economic group participation and has set milestones accordingly.

9 Monitoring arrangements

- 9.1 We shall undertake a comprehensive annual monitoring exercise of the effectiveness of our access measures. Such a review will consider both quantitative and qualitative performance indicators and reports will be submitted to the executive and academic committees as appropriate. The monitoring data collected throughout the application cycle will form the basis of the annual monitoring report submitted to OFFA each year.
- 9.2 The allocation of bursaries will be monitored and the numbers of eligible students will be recorded together with the numbers of requests made, and allocations granted to students for additional financial aid.

- 9.3 A review of the annual plan of outreach activity will be produced and an evaluation of the key objectives within the plan undertaken.
- 9.4 Tracking of applications from students falling within the widening access definitions will be monitored and reported upon. Specifically, data will be collected on applications received from the target audiences defined in section 6.2. and also those from the Associate College Partnership.
- 9.5 Enrolment data will be collected by school type, low socio economic groups, low participation neighbourhoods and ethnic minorities and measured against the milestones set within section 8.3.