

The Pilgrim Partnership Access Agreement

ACCESS AGREEMENT FOR: THE PILGRIM PARTNERSHIP

1. Introduction

The Pilgrim Partnership is a consortium of Bedfordshire Nursery and Lower Schools originally formed to offer Initial Teacher Training (ITT) leading to the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

It provides high quality initial training to give the opportunity to acquire:-

- Excellent professional attributes
- Good subject knowledge
- Well-developed skills in learning and teaching

and will further support the school improvement objectives of partner schools, other local schools and the LEA with relevant professional development for the entire schools workforce.

Its one-year post-graduate initial teacher training course will offer education and training for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and furnish trainees with the knowledge and skills to teach the core subjects competently and independently across this age range. To mirror the pattern of education within the schools, trainees will also be given a short but significant experience in lower Key Stage 2. The course will also enable trainees to teach the foundation subjects and RE independently, taking advice from an experienced teacher as appropriate and includes a particular focus on the philosophy and pedagogy in relation to the Early Years of education.

The Partnership is also a Designated Recommending Body (DRB) and therefore offers places on the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) on both Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 courses. Recently it has responded to the widening responsibilities of the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) by offering courses for all school staff, including the training for assessment of Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). It has the following strategic aims:-

- To confirm and protect the Partnership's position and to respond positively to changes within the context of national Initial Teacher Training as a provider of high quality education and training.
- To confirm the Partnership's position within its locality and to develop mutual support with its partner schools, other local schools and the LEA with high quality contributions to relevant professional development and positive responses to local recruitment needs and initiatives.
- To continue to develop the Partnership's self-assessment procedures, including the use of appropriate comparative data, to ensure continued improvement so that the current TDA quality category is maintained at the next review.
- To continue to develop the human and capital resources required to sustain high quality education and training
- To be involved in research to support the development of high quality education and training

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- To continue to develop strategies for recruitment to make its intake more representative of society at large and to increase the proportion of high quality trainees employed within Bedfordshire.

2. Length of agreement

- 2.1 This agreement is for 5 years from the academic year 2006/07. However, we have committed to return to OFFA by May 2008 to seek approval for our monitoring criteria, which due to a lack of relevant data, has not yet been developed.

3. Fee limits

- 3.1 We will charge a fee of up to £3,000 for all of our full-time postgraduate ITT courses leading to Qualified Teacher Status from the 2006/07 academic year. This agreement is for 5 years. The fee limit will rise with inflation (in line with annually published Government regulations).
- 3.2 The actual fees charged for the September 2006 entry will be £2500. The fee levels will be reviewed annually in the light of :-
- the impact of the fees on increasing the number of successful outcomes from under-represented groups
 - the impact of the fees in recruiting suitable applicants to the course

4 Bursary support

- 4.1 The Pilgrim Partnership undertakes to offer the Mandatory Bursary to all qualifying trainees should the fees set for any year within the agreement require this to be done. Thus where, in a particular year, the fee set exceeds the maximum maintenance grant allowable the Partnership will offer a bursary to all trainees in receipt of the maximum maintenance grant equivalent to the difference between that grant and the fee set. The bursary will be paid in three equal instalments in October, February and May. It will be paid in addition to the bursaries outlined in 4.2 and 4.3 below
- 4.2 The nature of our school-based course has particular implications in relation to travel between schools, the centre and the place of residence. The necessity to place trainees in a second school poses significant expenditure on travel/alternative accommodation. The Partnership will therefore offer a graduated bursary, related to the income bandings used to determine the Maintenance Grant, so that a trainee on a maximum grant will receive a bursary of £300 whilst a trainee with no maintenance grant will receive £200 This will be paid in a single instalment in March.
- 4.3 All trainees will receive a cash bursary of £500 to be paid in two instalments, £100 in January and £400 in July (the month when there are no TDA Bursary payments).
- 4.4 All 40 trainees will benefit from this bursary scheme which represents new support not previously offered to trainees here. Trainees in receipt of the full

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maintenance grant will benefit most (£800) whilst trainees with no maintenance grant will receive £700

5. Publicising fees and financial support

- 5.1 A number of methods will be used to ensure that prospective students are as clear as possible about the fee charged, and the amount of student support to which they may be entitled. These are outlined below:
- 5.2 The website www.pilgrimp.bedscc.gov.uk contains a page on finance, including fee and support information, and includes links to other sources of information. This information includes institutional support and support available through the government through the maintenance grant, teaching bursaries and student loans.
- 5.3 This information is published in our prospectus.
- 5.4 Applicants will be issued with the details of fees to be charged and bursaries offered, when they are offered an interview. The details will be repeated in the letter offering a place. This information will therefore be clearly articulated to applicants at offer stage, before they make their key decisions on whether to accept a place.

6. Outreach

- 6.1 The extensive subject knowledge requirements for Initial Teacher Training in the Primary phase means that trainees with degrees in a diverse range of non-National Curriculum subjects (e.g. psychology, photography) are under-represented nationally. The recent Ofsted inspection has suggested that the Partnership offers good training in meeting the individual needs of trainees as would be necessary to meet a target of increasing the proportion of this nationally under-represented group on this course.. The Partnership will spend £16000 of the additional income received to reduce group sizes during training and enhance the provision in meeting trainees individual subject needs, thus making the course more accessible to all applicants whose degrees are not in traditional National Curriculum subjects.

7. Institutional Targets and milestones

- 7.1 We currently do not collect data on which to determine baseline for targets and milestones around low income or socio-economic groups or degree subject of applicants. However, we believe that we will wish to monitor the numbers of students participating in our institution who are in receipt of full or partial state support. We will also wish to develop targets around other under-represented groups if identified and monitor carefully the effect of the outreach work, both on the nature of applicants offered places and the quality of outcome at the end of the course.
- 7.2 We will seek to maintain or increase the proportion of students in our target groups, but will only be able to set meaningful targets once data is available.

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We commit to return to OFFA to revise this agreement by May 2008, with a view to an amended agreement taking effect from the 2008/9 academic year. In the meantime we will continue to monitor our intake in relation to ethnic minorities and the under-representation of men in primary.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

- 8.1 We will formally monitor the progress of the access agreement at least once a year through the senior management team who will report annually to the Pilgrim Partnership Board. Initial monitoring will be concerned with participation rates and the development of data on lower income and other under-represented groups, against which to monitor. When baselines targets and milestones are determined we will look to monitor against these.
- 8.2 Our report to the Annual General Meeting of the Pilgrim Partnership Board will form the basis of our annual monitoring report to OFFA.