

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER
ACCESS AGREEMENT 2008/09 – 2010/11

1. Level of Fees

1.1. For students commencing courses after 1 September 2008 the University of Exeter proposes to set tuition fees across all undergraduate courses at the rate of £3,145 per annum¹, including students enrolled on PGCE courses. The only exceptions to this will be:

- BSc Medical Imaging (Diagnostic Radiography), for which the annual fee will be covered by an NHS Bursary;
- Students spending a whole year studying at a European University under the Socrates/Erasmus programme, who will be exempted from all tuition fees;
- Students undertaking a full-year placement either in industry or at a foreign university not covered by Socrates or Erasmus, who will be liable for fees of £1,570 per year;
- Fifth year B Medicine or B Surgery students at the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, where tuition fees will be met by the Department of Health.

1.2. Prices and charges will be publicised and made readily available to prospective applicants through the normal channels, as outlined in section 4.3 below. Students will be advised that these fees will be subject to annual inflationary rises, and the aggregate cost of studying on all programmes will be made clear.

1.3. We accept the principle that a significant proportion of the income generated through higher fees should be used to fund extended outreach activity and targeted bursary schemes. However, it is clear to us that students who will be paying the higher fees are likely to have much higher expectations in terms of facilities, resources and both academic and pastoral support. In response we must make every effort to ensure that their expectations are met and exceeded. Therefore, in drafting this agreement, we are aware of the need to strike an appropriate balance between these two demands on additional income.

2. Bursaries and Financial Support

2.1. The University of Exeter understands and fully supports the Government's concern regarding the potential deterrent nature of the perceived cost of higher education within some under-represented groups. When higher tuition-fees were introduced in 2006/07, we established generous bursary schemes using a significant amount of fee income on bursaries for students from poorer backgrounds, with similarly generous amounts for subsequent years. In this section we will outline the approach to targeting and promotion of bursaries for 2008/09² entrants, and in section 6 we will detail the proposed levels of expenditure between now and 2010/11.

2.2. Our UK Access Bursary Scheme will be open to any applicant to the University, and eligibility will be judged on the basis of financial criteria obtained via LA assessment for the purpose of entitlement to Grants and Loans. For 2008 entrants, all students from families with income levels below £25,000, (ie those who receive the full Maintenance

¹Fees will rise annually in line with inflation. Fee levels 2008 entrants are set at £3145

² The financial criteria for awarding bursaries at Exeter will change for 2008 entrants, but these changes will not be applied retrospectively to those entering in 2006 or 2007.

Grant), will be guaranteed a bursary of £1500. Students from families with incomes between £25,001 and £45,000 will be offered awards of either £1,000, £500 or £250, as is outlined in the Bursary Bandings table in Appendix 1.

- 2.3. We recognise that there is an increasing tendency for those under-represented in higher education to seek a place of study relatively close to their family home. The reason for this may be in part due to financial concerns and the expectation of family support, but may also be due to socio-cultural factors that limit geographical mobility for work and study in the case of lower socio-economic groups. Therefore we believe that we are most likely to attract students from poorer backgrounds from the southwest region.
- 2.4. For reasons outlined above, over recent years we have established and developed active working relationships with schools and colleges from this area. Section 3 gives details of our proposals for continued outreach provision with schools and colleges in the southwest. Through our outreach work, and with the support of teachers in schools and colleges, we will promote our regional top-up bursary scheme to those who are most in need of support.
- 2.5. The South West 'Top-Up' bursary scheme will offer additional support worth between £500 and £1,500 for those who demonstrate most need. We will give priority to those with the lowest household incomes, who are likely to face ongoing additional financial hardship due to unavoidable costs that cannot be met from other sources.
- 2.6. Through a targeted regional approach, the University is setting out to draw together the areas of outreach work and financial support, in order to develop a holistic and far reaching approach to the issues relating to under-aspiration and under-representation. The dual approach of national and regionally targeted schemes means that in some cases support of up to £3,000 per year will be available.
- 2.7. Different arrangements are in place to meet the special circumstances of prospective PGCE students, and prospective students at the Peninsula Medical School which is managed jointly by the Universities of Exeter and Plymouth:
 - 2.7.1. PGCE students will be liable for fees of £3,145, but will also be eligible for much more generous funding through TTA Bursaries and LEA Maintenance Grants. For this reason, we do not feel it appropriate to treat PGCE students in the same way as undergraduates when considering financial need. The School of Education and Lifelong Learning will retain the portion of fee income that would normally be allocated to the central pot for bursaries. All PGCE students who are in receipt of the full maintenance grant will be awarded the Minimum Standard Bursary of £310 from the School. In addition, the School has undertaken to retain the remainder from the 25% of the additional fee income used elsewhere for bursaries, and to use this to develop a scholarship scheme best suited for the challenges of attracting and recruiting a diverse range of talented students to PGCE courses.
 - 2.7.2. Students at the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry will be enrolled at either the University of Exeter, or the University of Plymouth. The two Universities will be offering different bursary support, and we intend to ensure that no student be treated less favourably as a result of their allocation to one or the other University. When considering bursary applications, PCMD will take account of the different support arrangements offered by each of the Universities, and will seek to ensure that the package of support offered matches the most generous that would be available for the specific needs of the student, irrespective of the student's home institution.

2.8. Taken together, we believe that the above measures reflect the University's commitment to tackling the possible deterrent effect of the perceived cost of higher education amongst disadvantaged groups. In summary to this section, the key points are as follows:

- the generosity in terms of the total amount of fee income that will be allocated to bursary provision;
- the availability of a national scheme open to any financially disadvantaged students;
- the embedding of financial support schemes into regional partnership and outreach provision;
- the establishment in 2005 of a pilot scheme funded from the University's own resources to test and improve mechanisms for targeting and application process.

3. Outreach Activities

3.1. Outreach activity at the University of Exeter is focused on a strong and active Regional Partnership with more than 50 schools and colleges across the southwest peninsula. We are also actively engaged in a range of interventions in collaboration with other HEIs in the south west through the Aimhigher programme. These outreach programmes have been developed with the aim of raising aspirations towards HE generally, and are not directly recruitive for the University of Exeter in particular.

3.2. Through this outreach provision we aim, through a range of workshops, presentations and publications, to raise awareness of the full range of support available to students; including maintenance grants, loans and institutional bursaries. Our intention will be to clarify and demystify the student support package before students make initial decisions about applying to HE.

3.3. Following the introduction of higher fees in 2006, Exeter has responded by investing heavily in our outreach provision. We intend to maintain this high level of activity in the following areas:

- by continued development of a programme of activities from year 10 – year 13 in partner schools;
- by maintaining and where possible increasing the number of outreach interventions made through partner schools;
- by maintaining and where possible increasing the number of pupils engaged in outreach activities.

4. Financial Information for Prospective Students

4.1. In the process of developing these proposals for financial support outlined under section 2, the University has given consideration to the means by which information on the availability of support should be communicated to prospective students.

4.2. Fee-income will continue to be used to support additional staff posts in the Student Funding Team, in order to ensure the effective distribution of advice and information. In order to develop a more proactive approach, and to offer individual financial advice to those who might be most deterred from considering HE, we will continue to support a post in the Students' Guild through which we will support the outreach programme for partner schools.

4.3. In respect of tuition fee levels and financial support available the University proposes to communicate with students in a number of ways:

- through printed and web-based information sources (prospectus, leaflets etc), to be distributed through the normal channels at UCAS HE Conventions and Careers Fairs. We expect this information to be available for distribution in line with prospectus publication dates, i.e. late in spring term in the year in which applications are made
- through finance workshops and advice surgeries in partner schools and colleges in the southwest, throughout the normal cycle of student preparation for application and entry, commencing spring term prior to application;
- through presentations and advice surgeries at open days and other recruitment events during the normal cycle of pre-application events and post-offer events.

5. Milestones and Measures of Progress

- 5.1. In considering the means by which the University might seek to measure progress, we believe it is important to build on work that is already underway. Much of the emphasis in widening participation initiatives has been driven by the HEFCE performance indicators showing the proportion of students drawn from state schools, and the proportion drawn from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Such data will be required for submission to HESA, and will be publicly available.
- 5.2. It is therefore proposed that the main indicators by which we will seek to measure progress should be rates of application and entry for students from state school and lower socio-economic classes. At the time of drafting the original Access Agreement, the most recent publicly available data was that held by HESA for institutional performance against these indicators for 2002/03, and this was used as the baseline against which we would measure progress.
- 5.3. The introduction of higher tuition fees attracted a significant amount of media attention. We were mindful of the possibility that this could result in some fluctuation in patterns of application, particularly amongst those from poorer backgrounds. For this reason, we believe it is more realistic to set targets to be achieved over the five years covered by the initial agreement running for 2006/07 and 2007/08, and this revised version covers 2008/09 to 2010/11.
- 5.4. The 2002/03 HESA Performance Indicator data which formed our baseline showed that we recruited 66.9% of our young undergraduate intake from state schools and 14.9% from lower socio-economic groups. We set ourselves the target of increasing these figures to 70% for state school entrants and 17% for lower social classes over the period covered by this agreement.
- 5.5. We have to date made good progress against these targets. Our internal calculation for 2006/07, which formed the basis of our return to HESA, reported that we had recruited 73.1% of our students from state schools and 16.8% from lower socio-economic groups. Through our programme of outreach activity, which we outline in section 3 above and in Appendix 2, we will continue to target activity towards under-represented groups and will report progress as required to OFFA.
- 5.6. The key outputs which we will measure on an annual basis including the following:
- Progress towards increased outreach activity as outlined in Appendix 2;
 - Numbers of bursary applications received and awards made;
 - Progress on offer and acceptance yields as outlined in 5.7 below.

5.7. In pursuit of our WP targets we will keep under review our application and admissions process, and continue to develop fair and transparent admissions policy which recognises potential and take measures of:

- the numbers of students from under-represented groups who apply to the University;
- the numbers of offers made to such students;
- the levels of acceptance;
- the conversion rates.

6. Financial Expenditure

6.1 As outlined in section 1.4, the University is committed to providing support for both bursary and outreach provision, whilst at the same time recognising the higher expectations of fee-paying students.

6.2 As part of our annual requirement to report to OFFA on actual and planned expenditure for the period covered by this agreement, we have estimated that under the current arrangements for bursaries, we will spend £3,313, 868 on bursaries in 2008/09, rising to £3,580,500 in 2010/11. In addition to the amount spent directly on bursaries, we have also made provision for administrative costs of £120,000, rising with inflation and salary costs to £128,482 in 2010/11.

6.3 Expenditure on outreach activity in 2007/08 amounts to £294,066. Most of this is met from central university resources, with only £30,000 being met from additional fee income. We anticipate this figure will increase in line with inflation and salary costs for 2008/09 and beyond

6.4 The University will undertake an annual review of the use of additional fee income, in order to consider whether this is being put to best use in pursuit of widening participation objectives. We will consult OFFA on any proposed changes.

7 Monitoring and Reporting Process

7.1 The University undertakes to report annually to OFFA outlining progress made towards milestones and measures laid out in Section 5 and financial expenditure on bursaries and outreach.

7.2 Appendix I – Bursary bandings for 2008/09 entrants

Bandings between £25,000 and £45,000			
<u>Income</u>	<u>Exeter Bandings</u>	<u>No of Students</u>	<u>Cost of Awards</u>
< £25,001	£ 1,500.00	588	£ 882,000.00
£25,001 to £30,000	£ 1,000.00	89	£ 89,000.00
£30,001 to £35,000	£ 500.00	89	£ 44,500.00
£35,001 to £45,000	£ 250.00	112	£ 28,000.00
£45,001	£ -		
Total		878	£ 1,043,500.00

Appendix 2

Planned Programme of Outreach Activities for 2008/09 – (to be reviewed annually)

Incoming school visits – Yrs 9 – 12

- Awareness and aspiration raising days with both WP and G&T cohorts
- Subject-specific activities to support progression to national strategically important and shortage subjects.

External visits to schools and colleges – Yrs 10 - 13

- Information and advice workshops to improve decision making
- Tutoring programme using Student Ambassadors to provide aspiration and awareness raising support for identified groups of WP students (Yrs 10 & 11)

Residential programmes (Yrs 10, 11, 12)

- Generic and subject specific programmes to raise aspirations for HE in general and support progression in specific shortage subjects in particular.

Community engagement (Yrs 7 – 13)

- To work in partnership with local secondary schools and Exeter College to raise aspirations and act as a positive role model of HE across the education community.
- To offer subject based programmes designed specifically for local schools
- To develop a coherent plan for opportunities for celebratory events and direct support for students.

Working with parents

- To provide information and advice at Parents' Evenings at Regional Partner schools.

Developments

- Improvements in targeting of specific groups for appropriate activities
- Working directly with schools to develop programmes to ensure full engagement
- Increased work with academic schools to co-ordinate subject specific outreach activities
- More effective use of Student Ambassadors as role models including liaison with the Student Associate Scheme to ensure alignment with WP agenda.