

University of Greenwich Access Agreement

1.0 Introduction

The University of Greenwich is based in South East London and Kent, with a mission to provide educational opportunities for the people of these areas as well as more widely. The University's main campuses are in the London Borough of Greenwich and in Medway: locations with the lowest category of HE participation in England (HEFCE 2005/03). In recognition of this, the University puts a high priority on widening participation and is proud of its track record. Our Access Agreement underpins this aspect of our mission as well as supporting targeted bursary schemes and enhancing our academic and pastoral support for students. We run an extensive range of activities, including Summer Schools, open days, HE awareness raising, challenge and discovery days, ambassador work with local schools, outreach programmes for underrepresented groups, progression compacts, transparent admissions and selection criteria and enhanced tutorial and pastoral support.

The University recruits many of its students from under-represented groups and performs well against its widening participation benchmarks (Table 1). For young full-time students on undergraduate programmes, the proportion recruited from state schools is 98%, against a benchmark of 95% and is a 1% decrease from 99% the previous year. Students from social classes III-M-V account for 56% of the undergraduate student body, exceeding the benchmark of 42%. The university is still working towards the revised benchmark of 13% for recruiting young full time students from low participant neighbourhoods (LPNs), again achieving 11% in the 2008/9 academic year. The number of young entrants who do not continue their studies after their first year has risen to 14%, which is a 1% increase from the previous academic year, with the University actively working towards achieving the benchmark of 11%. The non continuation rate of students from low participation neighbourhoods has increased sharply in the 2008/9 academic year to 19% from the revised percentage of 15% in the 2007/8 academic year, and this is currently being investigated.

Mature entrants comprise 54% of the undergraduate student body, with 6% of those recruited from low participation neighbourhoods or with no family history of higher education, which is 4% under the benchmark of 10% and a 1% reduction from the previous year. For the first time in several years the university is not achieving the benchmark for the non continuation of mature students, which in the 2008/9 academic year stands at 17% against a reduced benchmark of 15%. Unfortunately the figure for sub degree students was not available at the time of writing this document. Retention remains a priority and a range of measures have been instigated to ensure that students successfully complete their programme of study.

The University redrafted its widening participation strategy in 2009, adopting a student life model, to provide a holistic and integrated approach to widening participation. The strategy relates closely to the University's mission emphasis on nurturing excellence and covers the period of 2009 to 2013. It is anticipated that the strategy will provide a focus for strengthening retention among underrepresented groups within the university. One of the key elements of the University's work in widening participation is to create a mechanism whereby both young and more mature learners have access to a seamless pattern of contact, supporting raising aspirations, access and choice at various stages of their HE experience.

(a) Participation of under-represented Groups in HE: young and mature entrants 2003-2008

	Young Full Time First Degree - State Schools %			Young Full Time First Degree - From Social Class III, IV and V %			Young Full Time First Degree - From low participation neighbourhoods %			Mature Undergraduate %			Mature undergraduate - no previous HE and from low participation neighbourhoods %		
	UoG	Benchmark	UK	UoG	benchmark	UK	UoG	Benchmark	UK	UoG	Benchmark	UK	UoG	Benchmark	UK
2003 – 2004	96	94	87	46	37	29	17	12*	14	48	-	28	15	12*	16
2004 - 2005	97	94	87	43	37	29	18	13*	14	49	-	27	16	11*	16
2005 – 2006	97	94	87	47	37	29	17	18	14	48	-	27	16	17	17
2006 – 2007	98	95	88	46	38	30	10	12	9	44	-	26	8	11	11
2007 – 2008	99	95	88	45	38	30	11	13	10	52	-	27	7	10	12
2008 – 2009	98	95	-	56	42	-	11	13	-	54	-	-	6	10	-

(b) Non-continuation following year of entry - all FT First Degree entrants 2003-2008

	Young entrants not in HE following year of entry %			Mature entrants not in HE following year of entry %			Young Non continuation from low participant neighbourhoods with previous HE %			Sub degree – all entrants not in HE following year of entry %			Projected outcomes – neither award nor transfer %		
	UoG	Benchmark	UK	UoG	benchmark	UK	UoG	Benchmark	UK	UoG	Benchmark	UK	UoG	Benchmark	UK
2003 – 2004	13	10	8	18	16	15	10	12	11	19	19	17	25	21	14
2004 - 2005	11	11	8	14	17	16	11	13	11	16	18	18	22	21	15
2005 – 2006	8	10	7	14	15	14	8	13	10	17	17	17	18	20	14
2006 – 2007	6	10	7	10	10	14	7	11	10	10	17	18	21	20	14
2007 – 2008	13	11	7	16	16	15	15*	13	10	18	18	18	19	20	14
2008 – 2009	14	10	-	17	15	-	19	12	-	Not Available			15	18	-

2.0 Tuition Fee Levels – New Students The tuition fee levels are approved annually by the University’s Finance Committee. The following fees limits will apply for all full-time home (including EU) students enrolling on a University of Greenwich undergraduate programme from September 2010. The fee limits will apply throughout the student’s programme of study and will be subject to an annual fee setting exercise.

At the University of Greenwich’s Campuses:

Maritime Greenwich Campus
 Avery Hill Campus
 Medway Campus

At the Universities Partner colleges and Approved Centres:

Academy of Live and Recorded Arts
 Bexley College
 Bird College
 Bromley College of Further and Higher Education
 Canterbury College
 European School of Osteopathy
 Greenwich Community College
 Guildford College
 Hadlow College
 Lewisham College
 North West Kent College
 Orpington College
 West Kent College.

Undergraduate Honours Degree Programmes	£3,375 per annum
Higher national Diploma Programmes Foundation Degrees and other ‘sub-degree’ programmes	£3375 per annum
Post Compulsory Education and Training	£3375 per annum

2.1 Tuition Fee Levels – Continuing students The University of Greenwich’s fees policy for students who enrolled either in 2009/10 or earlier was to charge a fee less than the maximum level permitted by the UK government. Thus for continuing students, the lower fees that were in place at the time of commencement of studies will apply subject to annual inflation-related rise.

3.0 Bursaries and Financial Support for Students

The University of Greenwich understands the potential deterrent nature of high tuition fees on the participation of some students in higher education. Thus, when higher tuition fees were introduced in 2006/07, we set our fees at less than the maximum variable fee permitted thereby giving the equivalent of a bursary to all of our students. In addition, we also established bursary schemes targeted to specific groups of students. In this section we outline

the approach to targeting and promotion of bursaries for the 2011/12¹ entrants, who are paying maximum variable fees. In section 8 we detail the proposed levels of expenditure between now and 2011/12.

The following financial assistance measures will be available to all qualifying students on full-time honours degree programmes, full-time Higher National Diploma programmes and full-time Foundation Degrees except NHS funded programmes where alternative government funded schemes for student financial support apply.

Bursaries will apply to students studying **At the University of Greenwich's Campuses:** Maritime Greenwich Campus, Avery Hill Campus, Medway Campus and **At the University of Greenwich's Partner Colleges and Approved Centres:** Academy of Live and Recorded Arts, Bexley College, Bird College, Bromley College of Further and Higher Education, Canterbury College, European School of Osteopathy, Greenwich Community College, Guildford College, Hadlow College, Lewisham College, North West Kent College, Orpington College, West Kent College. The University will exceed the minimum required levels of bursary support to students.

Mandatory Bursary Students paying the maximum variable fee will be offered a bursary, subject to household income level and their being eligible for government means tested Maintenance Grants, mature UK students in this group, who are over the age of 25 at initial registration, will be eligible for a higher rate:

Household income level	Mandatory Bursary	Mature Student Rate
Up to £25,000	£400	£550
£25,001 - £29,500	£375	£525
£29,501 - £34,000	£350	£500
£34,001 and over	No Bursary Payable	No Bursary Payable

Progression Bursary Students in receipt of a Mandatory bursary who progress from year 1 to year 2 of study will receive a Progression Bursary payable in year 2 of £150. Progression is defined as having passed 120 credits and completed all last items of assessment at the first attempt.

Bursary payments Bursaries will be paid in a single instalment in February or March. The student loans company will administer the payment of the bursary to eligible students on behalf of the University.

Care Leaver's Bursary This bursary provides financial support to students entering higher education direct from local authority care. To be eligible the student must have been in care for a minimum of 52 consecutive weeks immediately prior to beginning the programme of study. The bursary is available to UK students aged 20 and under prior to September 1 in the first year of entry to the university. Applicants must be studying full-time undergraduate programmes. The bursary is for £1000 per year and is payable for a maximum of four years.

¹ The criteria for awarding bursaries at The University of Greenwich will remain the same as for 2010/11 entrants, but these changes will not be applied retrospectively to those entering previous years.

Payment in subsequent years is dependent on satisfactory progression and payment in a placement year is dependent on the placement being unpaid.

Scholarships The University will continue to offer a number of Scholarships to promote recruitment of students from diverse backgrounds, to boost the entry qualifications of the student cohort and to encourage the progression of students from partner colleges to the University. Partner progression scholarships of £525 are available to students who progress from a University of Greenwich programme at one of our partner colleges, directly to the final year of an honours programme at one of the main Campuses and who have achieved to a high standard at the college. In addition, a cash scholarship of £525 per year for a maximum of three years is available to home full-time undergraduate honours degree students. A cash scholarship of £525 per year for a maximum of two years is also available to home full-time undergraduate students studying on Foundation Degree and Higher National Diploma programmes. The criteria for excellence is that on entry the student must have achieved a UCAS tariff score of at least 350 points from A-levels or equivalent qualifications (not including AS level, key/core skills and passport points) obtained within two consecutive years of study directly before entry to the programme. Continuation of the scholarship into years two and three is subject to satisfactory academic progress. Merit awards for full-time and part-time students who are judged to demonstrate outstanding achievement during the programme of study will be awarded to students studying at the university or at one of its partner colleges.

4.0 Provision of Information to Students

The University has a strong system of student services and support including a team of financial advisors and student counsellors. As part of current widening participation activity, provision of information to both students and parents takes place on a regular basis through information packs and open and information evenings. With the introduction of variable fees it is recognised that students need more than ever to be given clear and accurate information.

The University has adopted a number of strategies, building on existing good practice, and increasing current levels of resource to ensure that prospective students are provided with the appropriate information. Additional emphasis has been placed on pre-entry guidance and the provision of both on-line and face-to-face support to enable applicants to plan how to finance their study and provide information about the level of support available through bursaries and other forms of financial assistance. The University has considerable expertise in helping students with difficulties through the Student Finance and Financial Support Section of the office of Student Affairs. Bursaries and financial support will be centrally administered through a standard set of criteria. Financial support and advice will draw on the experience of staff in gaining a rounded view of a student's financial position and providing appropriate advice and referral systems. Specific actions for prospective students includes:

- the provision of financial information, with 'Frequently Asked Questions' access to a budget calculator online and annually updated Bursaries and Scholarships information available on the web and in a dedicated booklet;
- named financial adviser with particular responsibility for provision of fee information relating to variable fees, state support, bursaries and scholarships;

- incorporation of financial and fees advice as an integral part of information provided for prospective students through open days, the website, the prospectus and other publications;
- a series of talks in local schools and colleges;
- inclusion of financial planning in our 'Preparation for HE' course which forms part of our range of outreach activity (see Annex);
- an information pack sent to all full and part-time students receiving offers of places on programmes, clarifying their position in relation to fees and financial support;
- a communications campaign developed by the Marketing Office.

For new and continuing students financial support and advice will be provided by the Student Finance and Financial Support team within the Office of Student Affairs. The team of advice and support staff will provide information and assistance to students through our Matrix accredited 'one-stop shop' facilities. We will:

- provide administrative support for the Access to Learning Fund and the Greenwich Financial Support Fund;
- continue to enhance our student finance web information and services to students
- provide support sessions on student finance.

5.0 Outreach work

The University has a well developed culture of strong student support and aims to provide a high quality system of pastoral, personal and academic support for all students. Such support is viewed by the University as of central importance in encouraging students from underrepresented groups to study at the University in the knowledge that a wide range of support mechanisms exist.

Pre-entry support is provided through a range of initiatives, and students are made aware of the systems of pastoral and personal support in the University through events and activities, for example taster days in Health and Social Care give pre-entry students the opportunity to experience a mini lecture, understand the entry requirements, what makes a good personal statement and curriculum linked learning.

The Summer University continues to enable students to access a number of learning skills courses designed to support preparation for university and their progression and success between different levels of study. These courses provide bridging support for learners entering the university and on-course support for undergraduates who are seeking to improve their academic skills.

Dyslexia and disability support is well developed. The Disability and Dyslexia team can be contacted at confirmation and clearing to provide students with advice on the support systems

available. The university has a strong network of support staff to assist with a range of needs for example note-taking.

The University has invested a proportion of new fee income recruiting additional academic staff to reduce staff-student ratios and to further enhance our learning and teaching and tutorial support services. Investment has also been put into enhancing teaching and learning through the newly formed Education Development Unit that is working on retention strategies and other projects such as the Greenwich Graduate Initiative that aims to develop explicit behaviours, values, skills and dispositions that we expect our graduates to develop and best prepare them for their future careers and the complexities and demands of life in a diverse and interconnected world.

Continuing outreach work with mature students has led to higher education level short courses being delivered to Access students in partner colleges, which act as bridging courses, giving students valuable experience of working at higher education level. Targeted taster days covering topics such as social work also give mature learners the opportunity to experience campus life and gain information on specific degree programmes. Open days dedicated to targeting part-time and work based learners, are run to inform mature learners of the range of flexible provision that the university offer.

Student Ambassadors (undergraduates employed by the university) continue to be an excellent resource for outreach work. They work mainly in schools and colleges to raise student aspirations and support achievement. An example of this is where Student Ambassadors have joined a Raising Achievement Group (RAG) in a local school, and work regularly throughout the year to raise aspirations and support the learning of underperforming students.

6.0 Milestones

The indicators set out in Table 1 will provide the measures against which the University will assess its progress. The main area where the University will seek improvement is in student retention as part of the aim of reducing rates of non-completion to at or below the benchmark. The University is currently investigating the causes of poor retention from low participation neighbourhoods that will help in devising strategies to improve retention for this particular group. Two milestones are therefore a key aspect of the Access Agreement:

(a) maintenance of the benchmark levels, or better performance, in relation to widening participation as evidenced by HEFCE performance indicators (Table 1a.).

(b) increase in student retention in the period 2009-2011 (measured in terms of projected outcomes of neither award nor transfer (Table 1b.).

The evaluation of the impact of access measures and widening participation initiatives and activities will be significant in enabling the university to assess not only the benefits of additional financial support measures and interventions, but also improvements in staff-student ratios and student support systems. As work takes place with pupils from upper primary through to secondary education it will be important to undertake longitudinal analysis of long term benefits of projects and activities. The University will monitor the retention and success rates of those entering University from low participation neighbourhoods and non traditional entry backgrounds, in order to evaluate the extent to

which provision of education and support mechanisms meets with student need. The University will also use management information to guide interventions to address, for example, student withdrawal and at risk programmes.

All University Schools will, in addition to existing targets, develop targets for retention, pass rates and employability of their student cohorts, as appropriate. This enables effective comparison and local issues to be addressed.

7.0 Monitoring Arrangements

The Access Agreement and associated Widening Participation Strategy will be monitored through the corporate plan and annual operating statement and through the University's committee structure. Regular reports will be made to the University's Learning and Quality Committee which has a particular responsibility for learning enhancement and student achievement. The Fees and Financial Support Group and the Student Finance and Financial Support Section of the Office of Student Affairs will also play a key role in monitoring activities.

8.0 Financial Expenditure

The University is committed to using the additional fee income to:

- Support bursary and scholarship schemes (as set out elsewhere in this document),
- Widen access including outreach activities,
- Enhance the student experience, and
- Improve progression and retention.

The estimated spend in 2010-11 on bursaries and outreach is £2.7m, accounting for 17% of additional fee income in this year. This spend rises with successive cohorts, and is estimated at £4m in 2013-14 (23% of total additional income). These take account of additional income and bursary commitments that result from the decision to migrate all of the University's undergraduate franchise provision onto the full variable fee beginning in 2011/12.

Annex

University of Greenwich Widening Participation Strategy 2009–13

1.0 Introduction

The university's Widening Participation Strategy has been developed as an integral part of institutional policy, in the context of the changing higher education environment, national and local priorities and targets to widen access and participation to higher education.

2.0 Institutional context

2.1 The university's mission

The University of Greenwich aims to provide high-quality education, research and enterprise for international, national, regional and local communities.

In doing so, it focuses on: expanding opportunities for students of all ages and many backgrounds; providing programmes with an emphasis on employability; the application of enterprise and research to defined needs.

2.2 Strategic Plan 2009–13

The University of Greenwich is committed to improving access to higher education for young people and adults who have the potential to benefit; this commitment is an integral aspect of all areas of the university's work. For the university, 'widening participation' refers to the commitment to deliver a wide range of activities and programmes aimed at increasing the participation and completion rates of learners from under-represented groups. The Strategic Plan 2009–13 identifies expanding opportunities for these groups as one of the university's five key aims, with the objectives of:

- Attracting and retaining students from a wide range of backgrounds and promoting equal opportunities for all
- Developing partnerships, both in the UK and overseas, which encourage progression through different levels of higher education.

The Widening Participation Strategy relates closely to other institutional strategies, including the Learning and Teaching Strategy, Human Resources Strategy, Access Agreement and Widening Participation Strategic Assessment. It aims to enhance co-ordination and collaboration of widening participation work across the university.

2.3 Key performance indicators

The university has identified a number of key performance indicators as a measure of its success in widening participation. These include the recruitment of students with a diverse range of entry qualifications, the number of students recruited from low-participation neighbourhoods and under-represented groups, and the retention and success of students. Performance is tracked against key performance indicators set by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as well as against the performance of other higher education institutions (HEI) in London and the South East and the university's peer group of post-92 institutions. The university aims to exceed its HEFCE benchmarks for both recruitment and retention of students and has developed a number of policies and approaches in response to achieving these.

The university consistently performs at or near its HEFCE benchmarks for widening participation. Over the last five years it has exceeded these in relation to students recruited from state schools and under-represented groups, placing Greenwich as one of the top-ten universities in the UK for widening participation. Meeting the benchmark for student retention has, however, been more challenging, and considerable focus has been placed on providing pre- and post-entry support, both for widening participation students and for University of Greenwich students as a whole. This has resulted in an improvement in retention rates, but nevertheless performance indicators remain below the average for UK HEIs and just below the university's benchmark.

2.4 Local context

The university has a long history of attracting and supporting learners who would not generally consider higher education. Widening participation is about more than simply recruiting a wider range of school leavers to traditional full-time degrees, it involves challenging current policies and practices in order to encourage older, part-time and work-based learners to apply to university too. This is especially important to the university, given the number of University of Greenwich students who are over 21 and the number who are enrolled in part-time study; many mature students are balancing study with employment and family commitments.

As an active member of three Aimhigher partnerships and four Lifelong Learning Networks, the university has developed strategies to encourage participation from communities whose participation in higher education is low. Customised pre-entry programmes have been developed with local schools, partner colleges and community groups to ensure that young people and adults are prepared for the demands of higher education and independent study. Targeting protocols support adults and young people who might otherwise be discouraged by social, cultural, economic or institutional barriers from continuing their studies and considering higher education. Social class differentials in higher education (HE) participation rates, rather than gender or ethnicity, are key to understanding under representation in the university's main catchment area of London and the South East. The university has also developed inclusive, innovative outreach programmes to promote equality of opportunity for disadvantaged groups such as disabled learners and care leavers, who are under-represented in higher education.

Close partnerships with nine further education colleges have ensured the growth of flexible higher education provision in college settings through a range of Level-3 progression programmes and foundation degrees, which are vital as the university prepares for the predicted demographic changes post 2010. Equally important is the provision of work-based and work-related learning opportunities that develop students' employability skills and support their progression into professional and managerial careers.

3.0 National context

The university's Widening Participation Strategy has been developed in the context of national policy, funding changes and external drivers for change. These changes will impact, in particular, on funding for widening participation work. The strategy has been framed in the light of a likely reduction in the amount of funding available to support widening participation activity in the future.

HEFCE outlined changes to the funding for improving retention, learning, teaching and widening access in *Future Support for Teaching Enhancement and Widening Participation* (HEFCE Guide 2008/28). These changes have increased funding for widening access and reduced funding for improving retention. The reduction has, in particular, impacted on London HEIs, and the university has made a careful assessment of the future focus of activities designed to support enhancement and retention work within available resources. Much widening participation work has hitherto been funded by special project funding through Aimhigher and Lifelong Learning Networks. Funding for Lifelong Learning

Networks will end in 2010 and Aimhigher funding, which is being progressively reduced, is uncertain beyond 2011. HEFCE has advised universities to target their increasingly limited resources where they can have the most impact (HEFCE Guide 2007/12, p7). In order to maximise value for money, over the next five years, outreach activities will focus on specific local communities and groups currently under-represented in higher education. For the first time, both universities and Aimhigher partnerships have to achieve numerical targets, with at least two-thirds of participants in widening participation activities being expected to come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds with no previous parental experience of higher education.

The university is also required by HEFCE to produce a comprehensive Widening Participation Strategic Assessment, bringing widening participation and access policies together into a single document (HEFCE Guide 2009/1) with an annual progress report as a condition of payment of the HEFCE allocation for widening participation.

In framing its Widening Participation Strategy, and associated activities, the university has thus had to make a careful assessment of the balance between sustained support for learners, and activities which maximise the exposure of young people and adults to higher education.

4.0 Revised framework for widening participation

The university developed its first Widening Participation Strategy in July 2001, with a further revision in November 2002; the latter adopted the student life cycle as a framework to integrate the wide range of widening participation initiatives within the university. This model has worked well and has enabled staff in Schools and departments to identify student needs, work collaboratively, seek funding and deliver appropriate provision for different target groups.

In order to respond to HEFCE's requests to monitor the effectiveness of current policy and practice, the university will continue to use a modified form of the student life cycle as an organising framework. This concept of the learner journey tracks students through different stages of education to support progression and success, and covers the following:

- Pre-entry
- Transition and progression
- Application and admission
- Curriculum and student support
- Employability
- Evaluating impact through monitoring and tracking.

5.0 Principles

The university's Widening Participation Strategy is underpinned by a number of key principles, involving a commitment to:

- Recognise the diversity of the student body, promote equality of opportunity and develop inclusive policies and practices that identify, acknowledge and rectify disadvantage and discrimination
- Widen access to all learners able to benefit from a higher education experience and ensure a fair and transparent application and admissions process
- Foster a range of innovative approaches to teaching, learning and student support that maximise student retention and success
- Develop opportunities to enhance students' employability skills
- Evaluate the impact of interventions, measure success and inform practice through research and staff development.

6.0 Target groups

The university has adopted the targeting guidance, outlined in *Higher Education Outreach: Targeting Disadvantaged Learners* (HEFCE Guide 2007/12) and will focus on targeting learners from disadvantaged and under-represented communities who are the first in their family to consider higher education and who have the potential to succeed in higher education. Priority groups will include:

- Lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 4 to 8) with a target of 66 per cent of participants in activities recruited from these groups
- Disadvantaged socio-economic groups living in areas of high deprivation (rank Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004<13000) with a target of 66 per cent of participants recruited from these groups
- Care leavers and looked-after children in the care system
- People with a disability or specific learning difficulty
- Vocational and work-based learners.

7.0 Aims

The strategy has six key aims that link closely with the student life cycle, each supported by a series of objectives and targeted activities for the period 2009–13. The activities are detailed in the Widening Participation Strategy Action Plan (see Annex 1). The six aims are:

1. Pre-entry: raising aspirations and attainment
2. Transition: facilitating progression into higher education
3. Application: ensuring inclusive admissions
4. Curriculum and student support: enhancing the student experience
5. Ensuring success: developing graduate employability
6. Evaluating impact and measuring success.

7.1 Raising aspirations and attainment

The university aims to work closely with target schools, partner colleges and community groups to raise the aspirations, achievement and participation in higher education of young people and adults in south-east London, Kent and Medway from low-participation neighbourhoods.

This will be achieved through:

- Developing a progression curriculum of outreach events, pre-entry programmes and sustained support that reaches targeted learners aged 13 to 30 in partner colleges, schools and community settings
- Recruiting and training a diverse group of student ambassadors, mentors and student associates
- Developing innovative activities to support the progression into higher education of HEFCE priority groups, including looked-after children in the care system, care leavers, young carers, hard-to-reach groups and young people and adults with a disability or specific learning difficulty.
- Key activities to deliver these objectives include:
 - Taster days and university visits
 - A progression curriculum
 - Ambassador support and mentoring
 - Sustained support programmes.

7.2 Facilitating progression into higher education

The university aims to develop and deliver support programmes and establish progression arrangements that increase the number of individuals from priority groups who make a successful application to, and progress into, higher education.

This will be achieved through:

- Establishing and promoting progression arrangements, such as ‘On Course’, that increase the range of available progression routes into higher education
- Supporting students in making an informed decision about, and submitting an effective application to, higher education
- Assisting students in developing the learning and personal skills, as well as the specialist knowledge, that are essential for a successful transition into higher education.

Key activities to deliver these objectives include:

- Development of progression arrangements and compacts
- On Course and other university pre-entry programmes
- Summer University.

7.3 Ensuring inclusive admissions

A key aim will be the review and enhancement of current policies and practices to ensure an open, transparent and consistent approach to the admissions process.

This will be achieved through:

- Operating clear, impartial and open recruitment, application and selection processes
- Providing information and training for staff to promote admissions and enhance progression without barriers
- Working collaboratively with Schools, Offices and the Access & Widening Participation Unit to maintain and disseminate accurate and comprehensive information related to higher education.

Key activities to deliver these objectives include:

- Open and information days
- A prospective student portal
- Admissions policy.

7.4 Enhancing the student experience

The university aims to develop an innovative and supportive curriculum with an explicit focus on the provision of a strongly supported learning environment to ensure retention, progression and student success.

This will be achieved through:

- Ensuring that all full-time and part-time programmes of learning have relevant, exciting and intellectually challenging curricula across a wide range of academic and practice-based disciplines
- Supporting students’ individual needs through a comprehensive system of pastoral care, personal tutoring and study skills support
- Supporting diverse approaches to teaching and assessment that provide for a variety of learning needs and recognise the diversity of student experiences and backgrounds
- Delivering appropriate training and guidance for staff
- Giving students a voice through a variety of formal and informal feedback mechanisms.

Key activities to deliver these objectives include:

- Enhanced induction
- Personal tutoring
- Summer University
- Academic skills support.

7.5 Developing graduate employability

The university's employability policy aims to ensure that students achieve their full potential and make the transition into graduate employment.

This will be achieved through:

- Developing and delivering a range of employability support for students and recent graduates to encourage the development of students' reflective skills and their knowledge of the graduate labour market.
- Offering a range of targeted work experience, mentoring and volunteering opportunities to enhance work-related learning.
- Analysing and publishing data from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education report on diversity factors and to support strategies to achieve the university's performance indicator and benchmark for graduate employment.

Key activities to deliver these objectives include:

- JobShop
- Student ambassador and mentoring work
- Work placements
- Careers events and information workshops.

7.6 Evaluating impact and measuring success

The university has established innovative systems to evaluate the impact and measure the success of its widening participation activities. These systems will be used to monitor progress towards achieving university and HEFCE targets, support small-scale research activities, identify and disseminate best practice and review progress. Evaluation of impact will be significant in enabling the university to assess the added value of both long- and short-term initiatives and will be important in supporting the regular review of the Widening Participation Strategy.

This will be achieved through:

- Identifying key performance indicators to measure success
- Undertaking demographic analysis and mapping of widening participation activities to measure the success of interventions for different cohorts and track individuals' progression through the learner journey database
- Annually analysing and disseminating data on monitoring activities and regularly reviewing the university's effectiveness in achieving HEFCE targeting guidance and the university's own key performance indicators.

Key activities to deliver these objectives include:

- Widening participation reports
- Mapping geo-demographic data
- Tracking learner progression
- Publishing results.

8.0 Implementation

The university's Widening Participation Strategy will be implemented through the key activities identified above and through initiatives currently outlined in School and Office annual reporting and planning documents. Progress towards achieving the aims and objectives will be monitored by the Learning & Quality Committee, which reports to Academic Council. Monitoring of progress will be completed annually through reviewing the action plan and reporting on outcomes to the Learning & Quality Committee. A synopsis of the university's widening participation work will be returned to HEFCE in Section 2 of the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment every December.

Appendices

Annex 1 – Widening Participation Strategy Action Plan 2009–13

References

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2001) *Guide 01/36: Strategies for Widening Participation in Higher Education: A Guide to Good Practice*. HEFCE.

Layer, G., Srivastava, A., Stuart, M. (2002) *Achieving Student Success: An Analysis of HEI Widening Participation Strategies and the Proposed Impact on Student Success, March 2002*. Action on Access/HEFCE.

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