



University of Hull: Access Agreement

1. Introduction

This Agreement sets out the measures taken by the University of Hull to safeguard and promote fair access. It is intended to cover a period of five years from 2005/06 – 2010/11. To ensure the measures are effective the University will conduct a review of the operation of this Agreement after the first intake of students to be charged variable fees (2006/07 intake).

This Agreement is structured as follows:

- Background - the context in which this Agreement is drafted
- Fees - the maximum limits
- Financial support for students - existing and future provision
- Communication and signposting - for students, parents and sponsors
- Outreach - existing and future provision
- Milestones - objectives to be achieved
- Monitoring and evaluation - measuring fulfilment of the Agreement

2. Background

The University of Hull is a pre-92 university with long standing commitment to access to higher education.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) commenced in 1999, publishing performance indicators¹ which cover a range of measures that, when taken together, indicate the extent to which an institution attracts a wide range of applications.

The indicators show that the University of Hull has consistently performed better than the national² average for participation of under-represented students:

- from state schools or colleges
- from social classes IIM, IV, V
- from low participation neighbourhoods
- in receipt of disabled students' allowance

The existing record of the University is not one that has been achieved by chance. We have an embedded, resourced and targeted widening participation strategy which:

- promotes outreach work to raise aspirations
- stimulates proactive engagement with partners to increase attainment
- provides student support services appropriate to deliver good levels of retention

It is our intention to sustain that record.

¹ Now published by Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

² English institutions

3. Fees

From 2006/07 we intend, subject to the terms of this Agreement, to adopt a maximum tuition fee for full time undergraduate programmes and the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) of £3,000 per annum. A reduced fee will be charged, at a maximum of £1,500 p.a. in 2006, for students on Foundation Years (Year Zero) and for the year abroad or on placement on relevant programmes. Tuition fees will be increased annually in line with government revisions of the fee cap.

An estimate of the additional fee income expected to be achieved over the five year term of this Agreement is set out in the cover sheet.

4. Financial support for students

Bursary provision

The current profile of entrants is that 43% of our full time undergraduates have their tuition fee paid by the Local Education Authority either in full or in part. We have, with effect from academic year 2006, decided to introduce an income contingent bursary scheme for students on full price (£3,000 p.a.) programmes who qualify for full or partial state maintenance support.

Bursaries for students in receipt of full state support

The University will offer undergraduate students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant a bursary of £1,000 per annum. The University will offer PGCE students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant a bursary of £300 per annum in 2006 revised annually to continue to bridge the gap between the grant and the tuition fee charged.

Bursaries for students in receipt of partial state support

We shall provide to those undergraduate students qualifying for partial state support annual bursaries as listed in Annex 1 of this agreement³.

Targeted bursaries

Our institution is based in an area of predominantly low attainment with significant areas of deprivation. We have, therefore, for the last nine years offered bursaries⁴, renewed annually subject to satisfactory progress, for students from schools or colleges within HU, YO, DN or LN postcodes. In awarding these bursaries we look for personal 'achievement' in its very widest sense. For example, awards are made to students who have overcome adversity to reach their goal and preference is given to students who are the first in their family to attend higher education. Students in receipt of these bursaries are expected to participate in our student ambassadors scheme and become core to our outreach work (see below, Section 6). Our bursary scheme has been made possible by the close relationships that we have developed with schools and colleges across our locality. We shall maintain our targeted bursary provision, monitor intakes from our locality as variable fees are rolled out and consider adjustments as necessary.

HYMS

The University is a partner with the University of York in the Hull York Medical School (HYMS). Although a separate entity from both institutions, in the interests of

³ Revised figures are reproduced in Annex 1

⁴ In 2005/06 40 worth £500 p.a.

transparency, details of its income contingent bursary provision are provided in Annex 1.

5. Communication and signposting

We accept that key to maintaining access will be the provision of accurate and timely information for applicants and their family. We have a range of support services which currently operate:

- Publications and website
- Student Recruitment Service
- Study Advice Service
- Student Ambassadors
- Gateway programme
- Local education providers network

Our fees for 2006 and beyond will be announced initially through a combination of statements in our prospectus, website announcements and specific publicity material devoted to funding issues. We are currently in the process of revising our website and have had in mind the need to make easily accessible information for applicants regarding fees, bursaries and scholarships. We currently publish detailed information for international students about the cost of living in our area and intend to extend this for home and EU students.

We intend proactively to engage with potential applicants through our outreach work and recruitment work led by the Student Recruitment Directorate. Our use of student ambassadors and our programme of detailed advice and guidance operating through partner schools and colleges will be important vehicles for ensuring that applicants receive accurate information.

In support of these arrangements and to administer the bursaries and scholarships we shall make provision to meet from our increased fee income £150k of costs.

6. Outreach

Our outreach work is already extensive. We are mindful that we need to work with schools and colleges both to deliver our own outreach activity but also that coordinated by Aimhigher for which we are the administrative host institution in the region. We shall continue to review our outreach. At this stage we do not envisage extensive additions but rather to enhance progressively existing activity in partnership, recognising the need to avoid 'swamping' schools with uncoordinated activity. We shall continue fully to engage with Aimhigher activity. In the absence of long term certainty about the funding of Aimhigher it is impossible to anticipate in this Agreement specific increased commitment.

We have a well supported, and nationally recognised, summer school provision operating for the last four years. Students have been drawn from across the region and hence a limited number of the students who have benefited from these summer schools have progressed to study at the University of Hull. To that extent, it has been a contribution to increasing progression into higher education and benefited other institutions. Whilst we anticipate maintaining our current level of commitment we intend to use additional tuition fee income to launch a series of assessed summer schools. These would be aimed more specifically at students in our locality with a view to stimulating applications to the University of Hull.

We recognise that a key element in sustaining and improving participation rates is to stimulate applications from those with prior experience, vocational or other qualifications rather than A levels. We intend to adopt a range of strategies aimed at increasing the number of non-A level applications to the university.

Our strategies will include:

- additional mandatory internal staff development to make staff more familiar with the range of qualifications and experience that applicants offer and to increase confidence that such students can achieve high standards
- extending the recognition of programmes which are accepted for access
- developing relationships with partners to allow guaranteed progression.

We shall fund, from increased fee income, additional £50k costs of our enhanced outreach activity.

7. Milestones and targets

Participation

- Over the period of this Agreement annually to remain above national average for entrants:
 - from state schools or colleges
 - from social classes IIM, IV, V
 - from low participation neighbourhoods
 - in receipt of disabled students' allowance

Summer schools

- by 2008, at least 100% expansion of participants from a base of 110
- by 2008, at least 70% of participants to progress into HE
- by 2008, at least 25% per annum to progress to the University of Hull.

Generating applications

- from 2006, 2% per annum growth of applications to HE from the Hull and North East Lincolnshire LEAs from 2005 baseline. [These areas have furthest to go in terms of applications to HE]

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of this Access Agreement will be the responsibility of a member of our Senior Management Team. The Agreement will be reviewed after the first intake of students in 2006/07 and more extensively in 2008/09.

Commitments in this Agreement will be built into the annual work plans for our Widening Participation and Student Recruitment Committees.

We shall revise our management information systems and allocate appropriate resource to ensure that we can measure, monitor and evaluate the targets and milestones that are part of this Agreement. We shall also ensure that data concerning attainment and progression are better understood within the institution.

Bursary scheme for students in receipt of state maintenance support on full price programmes at the University of Hull and Hull York Medical School

| Student category | Bursary support | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| In receipt of full state support or partial state support (with family income below £ 25,000 in 2008/09) | £1,000 per annum | Payable after 1 December. |
| In receipt of partial state support (£40,000 in 2008/09) | £500 per annum | Payable after 1 December. |

To be reviewed annually as government support levels change

Last updated Nov 07