



ACCESS AGREEMENT

Fee Limits

1. From September 2007, the University of Worcester will charge full time students £3070 per annum for all eligible courses. Fee levels will rise in subsequent years by the value of inflation. Part-time students will be charged a pro-rata fee depending on their volume of study.

Bursaries

2. All undergraduate students liable to pay the fee of £3070 per annum and who are in receipt of a maintenance grant will receive an annual bursary of £725. Approximately 60% of University of Worcester students on the relevant courses qualify for means tested support for tuition fees.
3. All other undergraduate students liable for the £3070 fee will receive a bursary of £500 per year. This baseline bursary will not be means-tested. A significant proportion of University of Worcester students have household incomes close to the qualifying limit for a maintenance grant. The University of Worcester does not wish to deter this group from entering higher education and this is especially so for the large number of mature students who choose to study at the University of Worcester.
4. PGCE students will receive a bursary of £305 per annum.
5. Both bursaries will be awarded as an integral part of the application/admissions process. Bursary payments will be staged to encourage retention.
6. Limited funds of £25,000 to £40,000 per year will also be earmarked to supplement funds received under the Access to Learning Fund or its successor. This will allow us to make additional awards to those students whose ability to continue their studies is jeopardised by extreme hardship. The existence of this scheme will be made known to students throughout the admission process and beyond, although it will be stressed that such payments will be exceptional and rare.
7. In addition to the above schemes, which will be funded from additional fee income, the University will also seek all means to augment the funding for bursaries by securing charitable and voluntary funds.

Information for Students

8. Full information about fee levels and bursary entitlement will be published in the prospectus and in other publicity leaflets. The institution already produces a guide to students on financial support and advice that is currently sent to all new students. This will be extended to include reference to the new fee and bursary arrangements. It will also include advice on living costs and advice on opportunities to combine full time study with part time employment. This is a particular strength of the University of Worcester where the Students' Union, in collaboration with Job Centre Plus, has pioneered a Job Point, the first of its kind to be located in an HEI. Where there are specific and additional costs associated with a course (e.g. courses in Art and Design and Outdoor Recreation Management) these will be set out at the time of the offer letter as well as referred to in course leaflets. A new area of the University's web-site will be developed, which will provide a comprehensive guide to the financial aspects of study. The institution employs a Financial Adviser to students and this post provides the focus for the provision of information and advice to applicants and students. Staff in the Marketing and Admissions offices also provide financial information and advice to potential students, through schools liaison, UCAS Fairs and other recruitment activities. A further financial adviser has been appointed to provide additional financial advice and guidance to students.

Outreach Work

9. The institution is a key player in regional AimHigher activities. It will continue its commitment to this Scheme in whatever form it takes from 2006 onwards. We will also:-
 - Fund the continued employment of a full time Pre Entry Advice and Guidance post. This post targets students in under-represented groups, in particular students from the poorest backgrounds, ethnic minority groups, and mature students. It offers impartial advice on routes into higher education, either at the University of Worcester or elsewhere.
 - Fund the continuation of the Student Achievement Officer post. This is regarded as a key post in supporting students who are recruited from groups with little or no previous experience of higher education.
 - Establish a new post of Outreach Worker to develop and organise a range of activities targeted at under-represented groups, including subject-specific matter-classes, taster days, summer schools, work with community and other groups in order to build on the work the institution has done using the Higher Education Active Community Fund.

- Establish a budget of £150,000 over the lifetime of the Agreement to stimulate additional outreach activities undertaken in conjunction with the University's partner FE Colleges in order to encourage transition from FE to HE, either at the University of Worcester or elsewhere. The University of Worcester will seek to use its strategic partnership with the University of Birmingham in this context.

Milestones

10. By the end of the 5 year period of its first Access Agreement, the institution will aim to achieve its benchmark for recruiting students from Social Classes IIM, IV and V, and from Low Participation Neighbourhoods. We shall also seek to maintain our higher than average number of disabled students (currently 6.8% on relevant full time undergraduate courses) and also maintain and enhance recruitment from ethnic minority groups (currently 3.9%, which is higher than the percentage of ethnic minority population in Worcestershire and Herefordshire, 2.45% and 0.90% respectively).

Institutional Monitoring Arrangements

11. The existing annual monitoring reporting systems will be extended to include the activities identified in the Access Agreement. This already requires individual areas of activity to report against specific goals and targets. UCAS statistics will be used to monitor the institution's success in increasing its pool of applicants from the target groups. The activities associated with outreach posts will be closely monitored, with regular reports to the member of the Executive Group with managerial responsibility for these areas. The institution's Executive Group will also receive a quarterly report of progress. An annual monitoring report will be presented to Academic Board and to the Board of Governors. The report will evaluate the administration of the bursary scheme and the outreach activities undertaken, and their impact on the institution's progress towards meeting its milestones for increasing recruitment from the under represented groups.