

# UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

## ACCESS AGREEMENT 2012-13

### Introduction

The University of Surrey is a research intensive University that has, and continues to make a significant investment in the Widening Participation agenda. It is also a University that has the highest student employability record in the sector and aims to offer a high quality education and student experience to all its students. It wishes to maintain all of these aspects in the new regime of fees. Surrey University is situated in one of the most expensive areas in England to work and study, as such its Access Agreement has focused on ensuring that financial aspects of studying at Surrey do not deter any student that has the potential and ability to succeed at the University.

### Benchmarks

The University of Surrey has met its 2009/10 HESA performance indicator location adjusted benchmark for both LPN 6.7% against 6.7% and for State School entrants 91.94% against 85.5% for State School entrants.

The University exceeded its 2008/9 HESA location adjusted benchmark for NS-SEC 4-7 students 28.0% against 27.9%. However in 2009/10 the University did not meet its NS-SEC 4-7 HESA location adjusted benchmark 23.1 against 25.0.

The University exceeded its HESA benchmark for non-continuation following year of entry in 2009/10 (5.4% against the benchmark of 6.7%).

The University continues to show its commitment to Widening Participation (WP) through the inclusion of a WP Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on the University's balanced scorecard which is monitored by Executive Board and Council (the University's governing body).

Our main undergraduate HESA student population trends over the last 4 years are:

- T1 LPN enrolments have shown a continued upward trend from 4.8% to 7.3%
- T1 NS-SEC 4-7 enrolments show a positive trend but as the latest data is based on a new measure the figures are no longer directly comparable.
- T1 State School enrolments have shown a 4.3% increase over the last 4 years.

Our overall student profiles over the last 4 years have shown the following trends:

- Our proportion of lower socio-economic students have shown a year-on-year increase from 23% to 30%
- Our proportion of BME students have shown a year-on-year increase from 30% to 36%
- Our mature and disabled student cohorts have remained stable at around 30% and 5% respectively
- Our student progression has shown an upward trend with a 10% improvement over this period increasing from 75% to 85%.

### Fees Limits and Fee Income above £6,000

The University intends to charge tuition fees of £9,000 for all new first year entrants to all full-time undergraduate programmes in 2012-13.

The University intends to charge tuition fees of £1,050 for students on the professional training year in 2014-15. Students with a household income of £25,000 or less will have the professional training year fee waived.

The University will apply annual increases in the fee rates in line with the amount of inflation set by Government each year, in order to maintain the same value in real terms.

## **Expenditure on Additional Access Measures**

. The OFFA guidelines for expenditure on access and retention measures suggest that universities like Surrey that have a below average proportion of under-represented students, should spend 30% of the fee above £6,000 on access and retention measures. The University intends to spend 30.8% of the fee above £6,000, on outreach and retention activities, bursaries and scholarships in 2012/13.

The University has a strong record in access and retention in meeting its HESA PI benchmarks, as outlined in paragraph 1, therefore the University is proposing to spend 28% of the fee above £6,000 at the steady state position in 2015/16.

The University is committed to extending its outreach and retention activities through further focused investment amounting to an additional £250,000 on outreach activities and £100,000 on retention activities.

In addition, as outlined in the WPSA, the University currently spends £1.2m on widening participation and outreach activity and £1.1m on student retention activity which is not countable in the existing OFFA access agreement

## **Additional Access Measures**

### Outreach activity and raising aspiration

The University has significant involvement in raising the aspiration of young people in low income communities. It is fully committed to continuing with existing activity, extending its area of influence through further focused outreach activity, whilst building on the AimHigher legacy within the local community. Given below are examples of the University's activities and commitment:

#### Primary School level activity

The University believes in early intervention and is committed to continuing with its *Junior University* programme which offers Year 6 pupils workshops consisting of: campus challenge treasure hunt tours, talks on university life from current students, and the provision of attainment raising activities. The main beneficiaries of this programme are Primary Schools that feed our WP target Secondary Schools. The academic Faculties of the University currently contribute around 10% of their subject-specific outreach activity to supporting work with over 4,500 Key Stage 2 pupils.

#### Secondary School level activity

A Year 12 residential summer school has been funded for over 10 years through a variety of sources ranging from the Sutton Trust to HEFCE's match-funded scheme with over 700 students taking part over the 10 year period. All attendees are selected from a pool of widening participation students. Of the 2009 cohort, 33 of the 75 attendees subsequently applied to Surrey, and 24% of those who applied finally enrolled. The University intends to continue this initiative, expanding it where possible.

## Tutoring and Mentoring schemes

Tutoring and Mentoring schemes in raising aspiration and achievement are well established between the University and the local community. Last year, 97 University students and 152 sixth formers were trained and placed in 58 schools and colleges to further enhance this very successful activity. A further 116 volunteers contributed to our educational volunteering projects, including our Reading Mentor scheme. Subject-specific support is provided by 26 undergraduates in Mathematics, Physics, and Modern Foreign Languages. These volunteers are encouraged to work in schools and have the opportunity to engage with our optional credit-bearing student ambassador schemes.

The University has received very positive feedback from partner schools, with one school reporting that on average, when compared to targets set by national benchmarks, their mentored students had:

- achieved approximately ½ a grade better in all subjects
- attained approximately 2 more good GCSEs
- bettered their target 'best 8 GCSE grades' by approximately 2 grade points in total.

The University intends to maintain and extend the Tutoring and Mentoring initiatives by extending the geographical reach of the programme.

The University through its Educational Liaison Centre (ELC) provides and will continue to provide aspiration raising programmes for schools and colleges. Currently 65% of its work is targeted on widening participation in schools and colleges. Over 1500 beneficiaries engage in these aspiration-raising programmes each year and pre- and post activity evaluations have shown that the proportion seriously thinking about going to university had increased from 136 to 321 annually as a result of their engagement.

Further activity has reached 150 students on AimHigher programmes. The University has also been significantly involved with WP activity through AimHigher London South. Three of our target schools in the Borough of Croydon have increased their annual applications to the University from 6 to 45 over the last 3 years. The University is committed to collaborative working and anticipates continuing its association and partnerships with a number of other HEIs, particularly Royal Holloway, University of London (through AimHigher Surrey) and with Kingston University (through AimHigher London South).

The University has launched its new *In2Surrey* compact scheme, which is piloting from 2012 with 4 schools and 5 FE colleges. The scheme is targeted at state-funded schools and colleges who are selected on the basis of progression rates to HE and indicators of socio-economic deprivation to help identify and support applicants from lower social economic backgrounds in progressing to higher education. The University provides workshops to help students identify strengths and course choices to achieve career aims, student finance information and interview skills. In addition, the University provides an online study skills package to prepare students for life and study at university. The students are also able to attend A level revision conferences and the residential year 12 summer schools held at the University.

The first qualifying student applications are expected in the 2012 application round. The University makes offers 1 grade below the standard offer for students from the *In2Surrey* scheme and asks them to complete an assessed piece of work. We expect that the *In2Surrey* scheme will be an important contribution to maintaining the widening participation profile in this research-intensive institution. In addition, the University provides Year 12 & 13 progression days for the students enrolled in the *In2Surrey* scheme.

The University maintains close links with Surrey Local Authority and its current pattern of Community Learning Partnerships as well as with other organisations such as the Education Business Partnership (EBP), the Lifelong Learning Network (Progress South Central LLN), the Strategic Health Authority (SHA), and numerous professional organisations through the subject links of our faculties. This work is currently being reviewed with the intention of identifying appropriate strands of activity that will further enhance the University's commitment to widening participation.

### University Faculty Level

Academic Faculties have a dedicated School Liaison Officer to focus and direct subject specific in providing further attainment raising activity. Faculty provision ranges from running macro-economic trading simulations to providing revision conferences. In the last academic year 34,554 students benefited from such subject-specific outreach activity. On average 50% of this activity is delivered to Years 12 & 13 while 40% supports work at Key Stages 3 & 4, and 10% supports primary schools intervention. As a result of improved targeting, actual enrolments from local WP schools and colleges have risen from 21 to 34 enrolments in 1 Faculty alone over the last 3 years.

### University Widening Access Fund from Fees

The University's Widening Access Fund has supported student retention and outreach activity within the University for a number of years. In the future, the fund will have new terms of reference aimed at ensuring greater emphasis is placed on identifying, developing and implementing strategic initiatives approved by the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC), and designed to improve fair access, widening participation and student retention from non-traditional backgrounds.

This fund has initiated the development of programmes and projects that enhance the learning experience of students from non-traditional backgrounds, for example:

- The Faculty of Health & Medical Sciences has reviewed how e-learning is being used to improve the learning experience of non-traditional students and formulated a toolkit for use by staff when introducing e-learning into a wide range of learning and teaching activities. The toolkit has added significant value to the learning experience of the identified students. This work will be extended and the outcomes on progression monitored.
- The Faculty of Arts & Human Sciences and the Faculty of Management & Law have jointly looked at understanding and managing mature students' support needs across the University. The recommendations of this work will be presented to ULTC in July 2011.

### Foundation Degrees

The University has introduced a Foundation Degree (in Health & Social Care) and also validates other foundation degrees franchised to Farnborough College. In addition, the University has in place franchise arrangements with other institutions, for example, the Academy of Contemporary Music, offering 2 year programmes. These programmes attract mature learners and it is planned to retain all these strands.

### Careers Service

The University's Careers Service provides an employer mentoring scheme whereby trained mentors from a range of employers are paired with University students. This scheme is used

to target students in need of additional guidance and support, and has been piloted with students with disabilities. It is planned to extend the scheme to include University students from local authority care backgrounds and students entering the University through the new *In2Surrey* compact scheme.

## **Student Retention Initiatives**

The University actively monitors the retention of all students to a granularity of course level and has introduced a number of initiatives to support student progression and completion. This has required the identification and effective use of data related to the progression of widening participation students within the overall student population. The performance is reported to the Executive Board and Council of the University. All aspects of this monitoring are reported as a standing item at the ULTC. The main progression and retention initiatives are given below:

- The University's Management Information System (MISR) provides data on progression within each academic Department in defined categories which include age; gender; ethnicity; disability; social class and qualification on entry. This data is used to analyse progression trends, identify student support needs and create action plans to meet the identified needs.
- The MISR data is used strategically by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) to set progression and retention targets at Departmental level which are overseen by the Faculties Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching) and monitored by ULTC. In addition, The Student Experience Subcommittee monitors and reports directly to ULTC on the student learning experience in relation to national benchmarks e.g. the National Student Survey.
- The University's Centre for Educational & Academic Development (CEAD) is currently leading a student progression and retention project, informed by the MISR data. This project has analysed the progression of defined widening participation student cohorts across the University and has recommended specific support strategies and interventions for both Central Service Departments and Faculties to ULTC.
- The Student Personal Learning and Study Hub (SPLASH) provides a range of online resources, one-to-one support and workshops to help students develop their academic and information skills. SPLASH run and will continue to lead on initiatives which target the needs of non-traditional students, for example: sessions specifically designed to support mature learners, and an online HE study skills element for the University's *In2Surrey* compact scheme.
- SPLASH and the Educational Liaison Centre (ELC) provide annual pre-entry days for incoming students, which are offered in addition to the normal student induction programme. These events are aimed at giving extra support for WP students and include bespoke events for mature learners. The pre-entry days include interactive workshops on study skills for higher education, how to use the library, and budgeting and finance. Participants are encouraged to meet staff from the wider University support services.
- Court Life Mentoring is a unique service offered by the University to all students living in University accommodation. Each court of residence has its own dedicated team of trained mentors. Mentors help students deal with the various issues that arise through communal living, as well as signposting and empowering students to provide solutions to problems. Mentors also organise social events to encourage students to get to know one another and to help them settle into university life and study. Court

Mentors thus provide a significant strand of support aimed at improving overall student retention and progression.

- The University achieved The Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark for Care Leavers in 2007 and since then the number of care leavers enrolled at the University has risen. In 2010, 8 care leavers enrolled; the highest number to date. The University will seek to renew its Quality Mark for a further 3 years. The scheme includes targeted bursaries for care leavers which will also be retained.
- The University is part of the HEFCE-funded "back on course" initiative. This is a retention service for the sector and provides an impartial advisory service for students who have exhausted their own university's retention scheme, helping them to reflect and focus on next steps back into university or other routes.

### **Financial Support for Students (Inclusive of NSP)**

The University has decided to invest more in targeted bursaries for students from low income backgrounds by developing a package of bursaries and fee waivers that will continue to encourage applications.

The University has a strong record in providing targeted bursaries. Tuition fees should not be a disincentive for talented young people who are considering applying to university, and a new package of financial support measures will ensure that talent and potential are the only factors that dictate attendance at the University and that students are not disadvantaged by personal financial circumstances.

All new first year entrants to all full-time undergraduate programmes in 2012-13 who have a household income of £25,000 or less will receive an award commensurate with the National Scholarship Programme (NSP) award of £3,000. Students living in University accommodation will have the choice of receiving either a £3,000 discount on the cost of accommodation or receive a £1,000 cash bursary and a £2,000 fee waiver. Students living at home or in rented accommodation will receive a £1,000 cash bursary and a £2,000 fee waiver.

The University will also run a Surrey Bursary scheme which will target financial support to students with a household income of £25,000 or less for all subsequent years of study, except for the professional training year. The award will be paid as a £2000 fee waiver and a £1,000 cash bursary. The Surrey Bursary scheme will also provide targeted bursaries of £1,500 to students with household income between £25,000 and £30,000 for all years of study, except for the professional training year and re-sit years. This award will be paid as a £1,000 fee waiver and a £500 cash bursary.

The University has a franchise arrangement with the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM) relating to 30 students studying on a two year Creative Sound Design for New Media programme. All new first year entrants to this ACM programme in 2012-13 who have a household income of £25,000 or less will receive an award commensurate with the National Scholarship Programme (NSP) award of £3,000. The award will be paid as a £3,000 fee waiver.

## Targets and Milestones

Within the current period of uncertainty, created by the increase of tuition fees, the University will continue to set itself challenging but realistic targets of maintaining the key HESA WP benchmarks. The University aims to continue to meet its location adjusted benchmark for the first degree HESA performance indicators:

- LPN
- NS-SEC 4-7
- State School entrants

In addition, the University balanced scorecard includes a WP KPI to improve its absolute performance in NS-SEC 4-7 which is monitored by the Executive Board and Council. The target is to improve this KPI by 1% in absolute terms within 1 year and a further 1% within the next two years.

The University has set a target in absolute terms to increase LPN PI from the current baseline of 6.7% to 7% in 2012/13 and a further 0.5% increase by 2014/15.

The University has set a target in absolute terms to maintain the state school PI at 91.4% from 2012/13 onwards.

The University exceeded its HESA benchmark for non-continuation following year of entry in 2009/10 (5.4% against the benchmark of 6.7%). Student progression has shown an upward trend with a 10% improvement over the last 4 years, and a significant improvement this year.

The University has set a target in absolute terms to decrease the non-continuation HESA PI to 5.2% in 2012/13 and a further decrease to 5% by 2014/15.

The University balanced scorecard includes a student progression KPI. The KPI target for 2010/11 is 85% and the target for 2011/12 is 87%. Progression and retention targets have also been set at Departmental level which are overseen by the Associate Deans (Learning & Teaching) and monitored by ULTC.

The University has set targets for increasing applications and enrolments of WP students through the *In2Surrey* scheme of 5 enrolments in 2012 increasing to 10 enrolments by 2013.

The University has set targets to improve evaluation of outreach activities as a mechanism for ensuring they are focused on raising the aspiration and attainment of WP students. A review is currently being undertaken to strategically identify WP students and match them appropriately to support activity. The University is committed to trebling its Widening Access Fund to £300,000.

The University will review annually the effectiveness of the NSP and the Surrey bursary scheme in attracting and retaining WP students.

## Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) is the senior person responsible for the delivery of the Access Agreement.

In 2010 the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC) structure was reviewed and revised, creating 4 Subcommittees each representing key strategic areas for improvement.

The 4 Subcommittees are:

- Admissions
- Student Experience
- Quality and Standards
- Widening participation and Outreach

The ULTC, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development), reports to Senate. Each of the Subcommittees is chaired by a Faculty Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching), who also sit on ULTC ensuring consistency.

The Widening Participation and Outreach Subcommittee (WPOS), reports to, and advises ULTC on:

- Widening Participation and Outreach activities
- Widening Participation Strategy
- monitoring and reporting of WP benchmarks and University WP KPIs

The Admissions Subcommittee (AS) reports to, and advises ULTC on:

- the monitoring of widening participation students through admissions, and is currently, analysing the pattern of enrolments against the original applications
- the use of contextual data in the admissions process
- identifying mechanism to improve the identification of WP students

To achieve coherence and consistency across the 2 Subcommittees, the University's WP Manager is a voting member of both the WPOS and the AS subcommittees.

The University currently evaluates its outreach activities, but in order for it to be more focused and strategic in its investment in WP, it has initiated a fundamental review of its activity and the methodology by which that activity is evaluated. The review is aimed at refining the evaluation process so it delivers data that can drive strategic decisions forward on improving WP and Fair Access. This will be used with contextual data, where appropriate, to create a benchmarking approach across the University.

The additional analytical processes will be applied, in the first instance, to the 4 key initiatives of: entrants through:

- *In2Surrey* compact scheme
- Year 12 residential summer school
- Year 12 Engineering Headstart Scheme
- Residential Year 12 Engineering Education Scheme

## **Provision of Information to Prospective Students**

Information, advice and guidance is currently central to, and will remain a part of, the University's outreach provision with a dedicated team travelling to schools and colleges providing workshops on a range of topics such as: applying to university; choosing a course and institution; personal statements; student life and student finance. Typically, around 200 such offsite events are held every year in addition to the support provided for on-campus WP target school visits.

The University will continue to provide clear, up-to-date information to prospective students through various information channels, e.g. websites and prospectuses. In addition, the University will ensure that the appropriate information is provided to UCAS, as part of the HEFCE Key Information for Students initiative, and to the Student Loan Company.





