

## **University Campus Suffolk**

### **Access Agreement 2012-13**

This agreement sets out how University Campus Suffolk (UCS) will safeguard and promote fair access to all of its HEFCE-funded full-time undergraduate programmes. This agreement is submitted on behalf of the whole UCS network.

#### **Introduction**

UCS is a partnership between the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex, Great Yarmouth College, Lowestoft College, Otley College, Suffolk New College and West Suffolk College. The first UCS students enrolled in September 2007. Our aim is to provide Suffolk with a thriving university campus with a hub in the county town of Ipswich, together with linked Centres in Bury St Edmunds, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Otley. The development of UCS is a county-wide initiative serving the whole of Suffolk and extending into Norfolk.

UCS offers a unique collaboration of higher education. The universities, building on their established reputations in teaching and research, collaborate with UCS to offer a professionally and vocationally relevant curriculum. All UCS degrees are jointly validated by both the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex. The two validating universities work closely with us to assure the quality and standards of all the degree courses we offer. UCS is a private company limited by guarantee.

The main campus in Ipswich, with linked Centres across the county, will become a beacon of excellence attracting students from Suffolk and beyond, helping to reverse the net export of graduates which has adversely affected Suffolk for many years.

UCS also provides a number of innovative local learning centres and points across Suffolk called Learning and Enterprise Access Points (LEAPS). These offer advice, opportunities and progression routes to further study at university level. UCS will use these to address the problems of isolation in rural and coastal communities in Suffolk and help to ensure that higher education is accessible to as many people as possible.

Widening participation has been central to the mission of UCS, and the profile of the higher education student body reflects this. UCS has a high proportion of under-represented students, and there is a broad mix of students across the undergraduate student body. In 2009-10 the total percentage of widening participation students on undergraduate programmes had increased by 3.45%. In 2009-10 46.4% of entrants were in receipt of bursaries.

The UCS student body is diverse and inclusive with 48% studying part-time and 63% classed as mature (over 21) in 2010-11. 10% of UCS students come from ethnic minorities against a background figure for Suffolk of 2.8% and for Ipswich of 6.6% (Suffolk Diversity Profile 2010; SCC Research & Intelligence, July 2010). 11% of UCS students disclose a disability and nearly 7% are in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance. Almost all UCS students (99%) come from a State School or College and over 43% are from lower SEC classes (4,5,6,7). The majority of students are from the eastern region with 66% from within the county of Suffolk. While the perception of Suffolk is often one of affluence, forty-seven wards have been designated as being within the most deprived 10% nationally (Indices of Deprivation, 2000).

In previous years UCS has reported on in-year retention and achievement where rates are high. In 2009-10, the in-year retention rate was 94.1% and the achievement rate was 92%. A key strength is the quality of student support and this aspect contributes significantly to the retention

and success rates of students. Now, in line with our new strategic direction, which still includes a strong commitment to widening participation, we wish to report on continuation data which is currently at 69% (2008-9 HESA) and needs improvement.

In June 2010, the QAA undertook an audit of the collaborative provision jointly validated by the University of Essex and University of East Anglia in respect of UCS and its Learning Network. The outcome was confidence in the academic standards of the awards and in the quality of the learning outcomes available to students.

## 1. Fee limits

UCS intends to charge new undergraduate entrants in 2012-13:

- £8,000 for full-time Honours degrees
- £7,500 for full-time Foundation degrees

In 2012-13 it is envisaged that there will be approximately 650 new full-time entrants paying a fee of £8,000 and 141 new full-time entrants paying a fee of £7,500.

The above fee levels will apply for the duration of students' studies.

## 2. Expenditure on additional access and retention measures

In 2012-13 the total figure to be spent on additional access and retention measures will be approximately £1.59 million and will be broken down as set out in the table below.

Once at a steady state in 2014-15, predicted expenditure will amount to approximately £2.0 million.

*Note: the above figures relate to the access and retention spend from additional full-time student fees. Proportionate increases to part-time fees will generate further access and retention spend.*

Previous access agreement expenditure that we will continue to make in 2012-13 e.g. bursaries	£888,000
Anticipated expenditure on new access and retention measures:	
- Outreach activities (including continuation and extension of a form of Aimhigher outreach work, plus new activities)	£153,000
- Improved Admissions information systems to support contextual data gathering	£25,000
- Retention measures	£179,000
- Careers and employability	£76,000
- Non-NSP Financial Support (Fee waivers)	£76,000
- NSP Financial Support (Fee waivers - match funding contribution)	£189,000

<b>Total Expenditure in 2012-13</b>	<b>£1,586,000</b>

The additional expenditure expected to be incurred in 2011-12 academic year, which relates to 2012-13 academic year, will be approximately £150,000. This will include maintaining a level of collaborative outreach resources (e.g. Aimhigher staff), continuing with 10% of previous outreach (including Aimhigher work), and preparation for 2012-13 activity.

### ***Assessment of access and retention record***

UCS has a high proportion of under-represented students and on this basis plans to spend 15% of the fee it charges above £6,000 per FTE on additional access and retention measures, in addition to the level of expenditure under UCS' existing Access Agreement.

This assessment is based on the following measures and indicators:

- 43% of UCS students are from lower-socio economic groups (4,5,6,7) (HESA data 08/09)
- 17.2% of mature full-time UCS students are from the lower socio economic groups (HESA data 08/09)
- 10% of UCS students come from ethnic minorities
- 99% of UCS students come from state schools or colleges
- In Suffolk the number of young people in Local Authority Care (LAC) progressing to university each year is in single figures
- 47 wards in Suffolk have been designated as being within the most deprived 10% nationally (Indices of Deprivation, 2000)
- A high number of students in Suffolk in low participation groups, are first generation HE students

### ***The balance between widening participation, fair access and retention***

In order to enhance access to UCS courses of under-represented groups in Suffolk and to increase the retention and success rates of students, UCS will concentrate most of its efforts on measures that will have a direct bearing on our own fair access, retention and performance. We are however keen to continue with outreach work that promotes widening participation generally and to maintain collaborative work previously carried out by Aimhigher and, as such, a proportion of our outreach work will continue to maintain and develop these partnerships.

### ***The balance between non-financial measures and financial support***

UCS currently spends around £1.3m p.a. on means-tested bursaries. We do not plan to offer bursaries to students from 2012-13 onwards. However, there will be expenditure on bursaries for current students completing their programmes.

In 2012-13 UCS will provide financial support by match funding the Government contribution towards the NSP. UCS will offer these scholarships as fee waivers. UCS will also operate its own additional fee waiver scheme in partnership with schools in Suffolk as part of an ongoing outreach and retention initiative.

Below is a broad indication of the proportion of our access spend between non-financial measures and financial support:

Financial support (fee waivers and continued bursaries) 68%

Non-financial measures (outreach and admissions, retention and success) 32%

We would anticipate that, as the amount spent on continuing bursaries in future years declines, the proportions will change.

### **3. Additional access measures**

#### ***Outreach***

UCS is committed to providing aspiration-raising activities for under-represented groups across Suffolk and encouraging them to apply for higher education. This will include working with schools and colleges with low progression rates, as well as with communities with low participation rates. It is proposed that a proportion of the additional fee income will be allocated to specific measures designed to increase access.

UCS will invest approximately £178,000 in outreach activities in 2012-13. This will include;

- Continuation and extension of outreach activities previously led by Aimhigher e.g. Summer Schools, Campus Visits, and targeted schools and college activity
- New outreach activity with other community groups e.g. mature students (working with Leap), military families, care leavers
- Resources, including maintaining widening participation staff
- A research project on ethnic minority groups, to inform future outreach activity
- Contextual data gathering

UCS is the realisation of a Suffolk-wide outreach framework and, as such, will continue to work in partnership with its partner FE colleges and other stakeholders, such as schools, Backing Young Suffolk and the Suffolk 14-19 Partnership, to widen participation. All outreach activities will be targeted and sustainable and will be run in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders. UCS outreach will target the following groups:

- Students from low income families, with particular emphasis on students from households with an income of less than £25,000
- Students previously counted as 'Aimhigher' students
- Students from younger year groups e.g. years 7 and 8
- Students with a physical or specific learning disability
- Students who live in, or have recently left, local authority care
- Students from military families
- Gifted and talented students
- Mature and part-time students

UCS will continue to run those activities previously funded by Aimhigher that have seen proven success. This will include Summer Schools, Campus Visits, IAG, working with FE colleges, taster events and Family Awareness days. We will also continue with those sustained and co-ordinated activities that work with students over a number of years e.g. the progression framework for year's 9-13 students.

In the first year of the new agreement UCS will run activities where there is evidence to prove that activity has previously been successful (either through Aimhigher data or UCS data), alongside new innovative ways to widen participation (e.g. Open House events, military families' awareness days and the Speakers in Schools project). UCS proposes to run a

research project on the representation of ethnic minority groups in Suffolk in HE, to inform future outreach activity with specific ethnic minority groups.

We anticipate that we will need to spend approximately £150K to bridge the gap between the end of Aimhigher funding in July 2011 and the start of our 2012-13 access agreement. This will mainly be spent on maintaining some resources and a continuation of some activities to maintain momentum.

UCS will also invest a proportion of its outreach investment on improved information systems to support contextual data gathering and subsequent staff training and development on its use.

### ***Student retention and success***

UCS has been steadily improving its retention rates over the past four years, but acknowledges there are still improvements to be made. UCS is committed to increasing student retention and success and it is proposed that a proportion of the additional fee income will be allocated to specific measures designed to improve retention and success rates. UCS will invest approximately £179,000 in retention, success and disability related activities.

One important aspect of improving retention is looking at how prepared students are, which links directly with outreach activity and also with the provision of pre-course study. UCS intends to develop pre-entry programmes of study that can be accessed on a part-time basis for students who are not yet ready for HE but would be ready after participating in such a programme.

High quality teaching is a key feature of providing a high quality student experience. A number of enhancement initiatives are already embedded in our learning and teaching practices. However, additionally UCS will also develop a Teaching Fellow Award where high quality teaching is recognised. Students will be involved in both nomination and judging. The Teaching Fellows will then be used to drive forward innovation in Teaching and Learning. Increased infrastructure demands may arise from the work of Teaching Fellows which will need to be supported. There will be a need for investment in particular learning technologies and developing a 24/7 learning environment to support the more flexible learning style of many students.

A good tutorial system is essential to enable lecturers to spot problems and deal with them early. UCS already has an excellent tutorial policy however, as with many initiatives, the students who really need the help are often the ones who fail to access it. At UCS we have not always been as successful as we would like at tracking tutorial uptake and chasing non-attendees so will be putting in place administrative support to stop at-risk students slipping through the net.

Although we have a general understanding of why students leave before they have achieved their award, we need to ensure we have better statistical data to evidence and help improve our withdrawal rates. UCS will resource a system for closely monitoring student withdrawals including exit interviews carried out by a member of staff who is not on the course team and a mechanism whereby all issues have to be followed up and signed off.

UCS is committed to improving the experience of students with disabilities and to this end will invest in the following equipment to support students:

- Equipping a room with webcam and appropriate assistive technologies to link to Access Centres so that virtual appointments can take place to speed up the assessment process

- A mobile hoist

UCS will also establish a ring fenced fund to support the needs of students with disabilities.

### ***Careers and employability***

A significant aspect of the UCS approach to improving the success of students from disadvantaged backgrounds is the attention to careers and employability advice including close engagement with employers to ensure the curriculum is fit for purpose. Whilst good progress has been made in this area since UCS was founded, this is an area which would benefit from more targeted investment. It is proposed that a proportion of the additional fee income is allocated to specific measures designed to enhance employment opportunities and work skills for students and to grow the graduate job market.

UCS will invest £76,000 in careers and employability activities. These will include:

- Expanding the provision of specialist careers and employability advice by appointment of an additional careers adviser post
- Extending the current internship scheme, providing a number of paid internships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (equivalent to 20 x 6 week internships)
- Employer liaison post to co-ordinate the internship scheme, exploring how UCS markets itself to businesses, gets students interested and turns employer liaison into tangible opportunities for our students, organising Careers fairs and speakers, working with Schools to match curriculum to employer needs, and brokering internships on a wider scale
- Specialist careers software, including equipping a room with webcam as part of a 'virtual' advisory service
- Training for careers staff in specialised services including personality assessment methods

### ***Financial support for students***

#### ***NSP Financial Support:***

UCS will match Government funding for the National Scholarship Programme in 2012-13, increasing the number of NSP awards offered to students who meet the eligibility criteria of the scheme. The number of scholarships allocated will be doubled, so that 126 students will be given a £3000 fee waiver in their first year of study.

The eligibility criteria will be as follows. Students must be:

- Below the £25K income threshold and eligible for the maintenance grant
- First generation to higher education
- Live in Suffolk, Essex, Norfolk or Cambridgeshire
- Be studying full or part-time
- Meet academic criteria determined by UCS

Provisional number of full NSP awards for 2012-13	63
Provisional NSP allocation for 2012-13	£189,000
Match funding allocation by UCS for 2012-13	£189,000

#### ***Non-NSP Financial Support – Suffolk School Fee Waiver Scheme:***

Suffolk suffers from low aspiration and attainment. UCS will set up a scheme which, in steady state, ensures that every state secondary school in Suffolk has a ***Student Access Champion***. Drawn from entrants nominated according to agreed criteria from each school, successful candidates chosen by competitive scholarship through academic achievement and interview, will work in a structured programme with appropriate groups in their former school to encourage widening access from disadvantaged schools. The successful candidates will receive full first year fee waivers. In order to target resources in the early years the scheme will focus on the 21 Schools identified as currently eligible for Aimhigher support and the FE colleges. It is proposed that a proportion of the additional fee income in 2012-13 (approximately £76,000) will be allocated to specific measures designed to increase access.

#### ***Current UCS bursaries:***

UCS will continue in 2012-13 with its current bursary scheme for continuing students in years two and three.

## **4. Target and milestones**

### **Targets and milestones relating to applicants, entrants or student body**

The following targets are over five years, with measurable milestones at the end of each year.

- UCS will aim to increase the current broad mix of its undergraduate student body, to 45% of students from lower socio-economic groups
- UCS will aim to maintain an in-year retention rate of 95%
- UCS will aim to increase its in-year achievement rates by 0.5% each year
- UCS will aim to increase student continuation by 2% in years 1-3 and by 1% in years 4-5
- UCS will aim to increase the number of students who disclose a disability by 0.5% each year
- UCS will aim to increase the number of students from BME backgrounds by 0.25% each year
- UCS will increase the number of Care Leavers in Suffolk applying to HE by two students each year
- UCS has an exceptionally high proportion of students from state schools and colleges. We will continue to maintain a high proportion.

### **Other targets and milestones**

The following targets are over five years, with measurable milestones at the end of each year.

- UCS will increase the number of residential and non-residential Summer Schools it runs for schools
- UCS will increase the number of outreach activities it runs for schools and colleges by 10% in years 1-2 and by 15% in years 3-5
- UCS aims to enhance the number of paid internships for students over the five years
- UCS aims to increase its graduate employability rate by 2% each year
- UCS will increase the number of schools which participate in the UCS Fee Waiver Scheme from the 21 Aimhigher schools and five colleges to all state schools in Suffolk over five years

## **5. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements**

### ***Institutional monitoring arrangements***

UCS undertakes to monitor compliance with the commitments made under this agreement and its progress against out targets and milestones. The following indicators will be monitored annually:

- The retention and achievement rates of full-time undergraduates
- The socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, age and entry qualifications of its new entrants
- The graduate employability rates of full-time undergraduates
- Quantity of outreach activities taking place in each year

The monitoring will be undertaken via annual reports to the UCS Academic Board and the Senates of the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex via the UCS Joint Academic Committee. Reports will be submitted by the Deputy Provost (Professional Services).

### **Evaluation**

UCS will evaluate all measures in the agreement to ensure long term value for money. Evaluation and monitoring data will be collected for all initiatives and activities by the following methods:

- Pre and post evaluation questionnaires to assess impact of activity
- The Data Intelligence Group which provides a forum to monitor data and evaluate WP activity
- The Management Information Unit which provides statistics on socio-economic data relating to retention and other matters
- The Equality and Diversity Committee which reviews UCS data on ethnic minority, age and disability – with specific working groups looking at retention and progression

UCS will also work with Aimhigher to determine how we share data and continue evaluation of Aimhigher target groups beyond 2011.

## **6. Provision of information to prospective students**

UCS is committed to clearly informing prospective applicants and existing students of the tuition fees that we charge and the financial support we offer students in each year of travel, including information on the NSP.

Information will be made available through a wide range of channels which will include specific information leaflets for applicants, the UCS website, its printed prospectuses, associated documentation, social networks and other online tools e.g. vodcasts and podcasts. This will become available to students from the start of 2011-12 academic year. UCS also commits to providing UCAS and SLC with information as required to populate their applicant-facing web services.

Applicants will also be advised of the estimated associated costs of studying on particular courses during the application process and on the website, along with advice on the support available both at UCS and more broadly.

The UCS Infozone provides both current students and applicants with a well-established Student Support Service including specific student financial and welfare advice. Pro-active Recruitment and Admissions teams also support and advise applicants through the admissions process. The UCS Infozone also provides an IAG service to students and applicants, as well as to members of the public both online and in person.



The cost of tuition fees for the duration of the course will be confirmed in writing before the applicant enrolls as a student. Prospective students will also be notified that fees due in the second and subsequent academic years of a course of more than one academic year's duration are expected to rise in line with inflation according to the amount set out in regulations published by the government each year.

### Table 5 - Milestones and targets

**Table 5a - Statistical milestones and targets relating to your applicants, entrants or student body (e.g. HESA, UCAS or internal targets)**

[illegible]

### Table 5b - Other milestones and targets

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around your outreach work (including collaborative outreach work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access. These should be measurable outcomes based targets and should focus on the number of pupils reached by a particular activity/programme, or number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.

[illegible]