

Introduction

Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln (BG) has very strong track record in relation to widening participation. As a Church University College we are committed to being a community which welcomes and hosts a diverse population of students and staff, and fosters an ethos of mutual respect, trust and care. We are an open, forward looking community that celebrates diversity and welcomes applications from all students and trainees regardless of their race, disability, gender (and its reassignment), marriage/civil partnership, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, age, or religion and belief.

BG is committed to widening access and aims to encourage applications from all communities, particularly those currently under-represented in higher education generally, and at the University College specifically. In April 2012, 65% of BG's students on undergraduate and PGCE programmes met at least one definition of "widening participation backgrounds". In considering its tuition fees for the new funding system from 2012 onwards BG has explicitly adopted an approach of seeking to charge the true cost of delivering programmes, without artificially inflating or discounting the fee. The principles which the University College's Governing Body have adopted for the purpose of determining our fee include explicit recognition that, irrespective of externally imposed requirements, we intend to continue to support access to the University College from under-represented groups.

This Access Agreement is written with reference to the guidance issued by the Office For Fair Access (OFFA).

Important note: at the time of publication, the content of this document is ***provisional pending Governor decisions on tuition fees and budget for 2013/14.***

Note regarding changes in mode of study

Students who started a part-time course prior to 1st September 2012, who transfer to a full-time course after that date will be subject to Section A of this agreement.

Students who started a full-time course prior to 1st September 2012, who transfer to a part-time course after that date will be subject to Section B of this agreement.

Students who started a full-time course prior to 1st September 2012, who remain registered on a full-time course with part-time attendance will be subject to Section C of this agreement.

- SECTION A: FULL-TIME STUDENTS STARTING A HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FROM SEPTEMBER 2013, OR CONTINUING A HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME WHICH STARTED IN SEPTEMBER 2012
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**SECTION A:
FULL-TIME STUDENTS STARTING A HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FROM
SEPTEMBER 2013, OR CONTINUING A HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME WHICH
STARTED IN SEPTEMBER 2012**

This section refers to arrangements for full-time students starting HEFCE and Teaching Agency (TA) FdA, BA/BSc (Hons), and PGCE programmes from 1st September 2013, and full-time students who started studying on these programmes on or after 1st September 2012.

Note: students starting full-time BA/BSc (Hons) 'end-on' programmes will fall under the arrangements in this section if:

Students to whom this section of the agreement applies, who are required to pay tuition fees of at least £6,000 per academic year, are referred to in this document as "OFFA countable".

A1. Tuition fees, student numbers, and fee increases in subsequent years

A1.1 Tuition Fees

BG proposes to charge the following tuition fees for full-time HEFCE and TA programmes in 2013/14:

Programme:	Fee (2013/ 14)
FdA	£5,625
BA/BSc (Hons)	£7,500
PGCE	£9,000

Foundation degree students:

The FdA fee is below £6,000 and, in accordance with the OFFA guidance, no Access Agreement is required for these programmes. The financial support provisions set out within this Access Agreement **are not applicable** to FdA programmes.

'End-on' students:

Please note that FdA students progressing to BA/BSc (Hons) level 'end-on' programmes are covered by Section A of this document where they are:

From September 2012:

- a) the gap between the end of the programme in which they gained their lower qualification (e.g., FdA or equivalent) and the 'end-on' programme is longer than the long vacation at the end of the academic year, or
- b) the lower qualification was studied part-time and they have switched to a full-time mode of study for their 'end-on' programme, even if the only gap between the lower qualification and the end-on course is the long vacation at the end of the academic year.

From September 2014:

The 'end-on' programme commences in the academic year immediately following the long vacation at the end of the academic year in which they gained their lower qualification (e.g., FdA or equivalent), where the programme leading to the lower qualification was full-time and began in the 2012/13 academic year or later.

All other FdA students studying a BA/BSc (Hons) level 'end-on' programme directly after completing a FdA or equivalent should refer to Section C.

Equivalent or Lower Qualifications

Students studying a course which leads to a qualification which is the equivalent, or lower than one they already hold are not covered by the financial support provisions set out within this Access Agreement.

A1.2 Student numbers:

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ENTRANTS AT EACH FEE LEVEL:

	HEFCE	TA
FdA:	62	0
BA/BSc (Hons):	379	84
PGCE:	0	299

A1.3 Fee increases in subsequent years:

All fees will usually be subject to annual increases, usually in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate (current at the time of the increase), in order to maintain their value in real terms. BG reserves the right to review its fees for all its programmes for 2014-15 within the limits set by OFFA. Information about fee levels will be clearly communicated to students at the earliest opportunity, as indicated in section H below.

A2. Financial support

The following additional financial support arrangements will be available to OFFA countable students:

2.1 BG Discretionary Fund

BG's Discretionary Fund will be increased to provide additional targeted support to students experiencing financial hardship during their studies. The fund will be available to all OFFA countable students, but will prioritise assistance to students from under-represented groups, using a system of allocation similar to that of the Access to Learning Fund.

Students will be able to apply to the Discretionary Fund once they are registered on their programme of study. Support from the Fund will be aimed at course-related expenditure such as books/materials, travel and child care. Offering a suite of vocational programmes, all of which include some element of work based placement, and operating as we do in one of the most deeply rural areas of the country, the availability of discretionary funds to support transport needs can be particularly critical to the retention of BG students from disadvantaged groups.

The Discretionary Fund will provide enhanced financial support to students from a care background, whose circumstances satisfy the eligibility criteria published by the Who Cares Trust (<http://j.mp/IUdmg>) up to a maximum of £3,600 per academic year (inclusive of any funds payable from the National Scholarship Programme).

2.2 National Scholarship Programme

Eligibility for scholarships

Students required to pay tuition fees of a minimum of £6,000 per academic year, whose household incomes are assessed as £25,000 or below, are eligible to be considered for assistance under the National Scholarship Programme, subject to the additional criteria below.

The National Scholarship Programme is **not available** to PGCE students, in accordance with OFFA's published guidance.

BG will receive funding from government equivalent to 44 scholarships in 2013/14. We will match this funding by providing an additional 44 scholarships worth £3,000 each, rather than by increasing the value of the individual scholarships.

Approximately half of our students normally fall within the basic eligibility category of having declared family income of less than £25,000. To identify those within this large group who should benefit from the scholarships, we intend to take the following approach:

- a) We will give first priority to students from care backgrounds.
- b) For the remaining scholarships, we will consider any eligible candidates who have exceeded our normal entry requirements for their programme.
- c) Should the number of those potentially eligible based on b. above exceed the number of scholarships available, we will rank order the potentially eligible candidates according to the relative deprivation of their home address location, defined according to the Government index of multiple deprivation .

To illustrate, we might expect to have a total of 400 new students with a family income of less than £25,000 and 88 scholarships to award. We would award scholarships to all care leavers, typically an average of 3 new entrants per year. Of the remaining potentially eligible students, we might expect 100 to have exceeded our entry requirements. We would then rank order those 100 scholarship candidates according to how far up the index of multiple deprivation their home address featured. The remaining scholarships would be awarded to those with home addresses in the most deprived areas.

Form of the scholarship

We will award £1,000 of the scholarship as a cash payment. The remaining £2,000 will normally take the form of a contribution to the student's accommodation costs, either through a reduction in their on-campus accommodation charges if resident on campus, or, if non-resident, a payment to their landlord or mortgage provider. Exceptionally if the student's circumstances mean that it would be unfairly discriminatory for the scholarship to take this form, we would be prepared to consider making a contribution to other costs of study such as, for example, transportation or childcare.

For part-time students, the scholarship would take the form of a fee waiver, as no other form of assistance is permissible under the scheme.

The full £3,000 value of the scholarship will be paid in the first year of study.

**SECTION B:
PART-TIME STUDENTS STARTING A HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME FROM
SEPTEMBER 2013, OR CONTINUING A HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME WHICH
STARTED IN SEPTEMBER 2012**

This section refers to arrangements for part-time students starting HEFCE and Teaching Agency FdA, BA/BSc (Hons), and PGCE programmes from 1st September 2013, and part-time students who started studying on these programmes on or after 1st September 2012.

Students to whom this section of the agreement applies, who are required to pay tuition fees of at least £4,500 per academic year (at 75% intensity of study), are referred to in this document as "OFFA countable".

B1. Tuition fees, and fee increases in subsequent years

B1.1 Tuition Fees

BG proposes to charge the following fees to new students on part-time HEFCE and TA undergraduate programmes in 2012/13:

Programme:	Tuition Fee 2012/13 and 2013/14
FdA	up to £4,218; £1406 per 30 credit module minimum intensity = 30 credits (25%) maximum intensity = 90 credits (75%)
BA/BSc (Hons)	up to £5,625; £1,250 per 20 credit module minimum intensity = 30 credits (25%) maximum intensity = 90 credits (75%)
PGCE	up to £4,500 a year

Foundation degree students:

The full-time equivalent FdA fee is below £6,000 and, in accordance with the OFFA guidance, no Access Agreement is required for these programmes as the part-time fee at the maximum 75% study intensity is less than £4,500. The provisions set out within this Access Agreement **are not applicable** to FdA programmes.

'End-on' students:

Students starting part-time BA/BSc (Hons) 'end-on' programmes will fall under the arrangements in this section if:

From September 2012:

- a) the gap between the end of the programme in which they gained their lower qualification (e.g., an FdA) and the new part-time programme is longer than the long vacation at the end of the academic year, or
- b) the lower qualification was studied full-time and they have switched to a part-time mode of study for their 'end-on' programme, even if the only gap between the lower qualification and the end-on course is the long vacation at the end of the academic year.

From September 2015:

the part-time 'end-on' programme commences in the academic year immediately following the long vacation at the end of the academic year in which they gained their lower qualification (e.g., FdA or equivalent), where the part-time programme leading to the lower qualification began in the 2012/13 academic year or later.

All other part-time FdA students progressing to part-time BA/BSc (Hons) level 'top-up' programmes should refer to Section C.

Equivalent or Lower Qualifications

Students studying a course which leads to a qualification which is equivalent, or lower than one they already hold are not covered by the financial support provisions set out within this Access Agreement.

B1.2 Fee increases in subsequent years:

All fees will usually be subject to annual increases, usually in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate (current at the time of the increase), in order to maintain their value in real terms. BG reserves the right to review its fees for all its programmes for 2014-15 within the limits set by OFFA. Information about fee levels will be clearly communicated to students at the earliest opportunity, as indicated in section H below.

B2. Financial support

The following additional financial support arrangements will be available to OFFA countable part-time students:

B2.1 BG Discretionary Fund

BG's Discretionary Fund will be increased to provide additional targeted support to students experiencing financial hardship during their studies. The fund will be available to all OFFA countable students, but will prioritise assistance to students from under-represented groups, using a system of allocation similar to that of the Access to Learning Fund.

Students will be able to apply to the Discretionary Fund once they are registered on their programme of study. Support from the Fund will be aimed at course-related expenditure such as books/materials, travel and child care. Offering a suite of vocational programmes, all of which include some element of work based placement, and operating as we do in one of the most deeply rural areas of the country, the availability of discretionary funds to support transport needs can be particularly critical to the retention of BG students from disadvantaged groups.

The Discretionary Fund will provide enhanced financial support to students from a care background, whose circumstances satisfy the eligibility criteria published by the Who Cares Trust (<http://j.mp/IUdmaG>) up to a maximum of £3,600 per academic year (inclusive of any funds payable from the National Scholarship Programme).

B2.2 National Scholarship Programme

Eligibility for scholarships

Part-time students required to pay tuition fees of a minimum of £1,500 per academic year for 25% intensity of study, whose household incomes are assessed as £25,000 or below, are eligible to be considered for assistance under the National Scholarship Programme, subject to the additional criteria below.

The National Scholarship Programme is **not available** to PGCE students, in accordance with OFFA's published guidance.

BG will receive funding from government equivalent to 44 full-time equivalent scholarships in 2013/14. We will match this funding by providing an additional 44 full-time equivalent scholarships worth £3,000 each, rather than by increasing the value of the individual scholarships.

Approximately half of our students normally fall within the basic eligibility category of having declared family income of less than

£25,000. To identify those within this large group who should benefit from the scholarships, we intend to take the following approach:

- a) We will give first priority to students from care backgrounds.
- b) For the remaining scholarships, we will consider any eligible candidates who have exceeded our normal entry requirements for their programme.
- c) Should the number of those potentially eligible based on b. above exceed the number of scholarships available, we will rank order the potentially eligible candidates according to the relative deprivation of their home address location, defined according to the Government index of multiple deprivation .

To illustrate, we might expect to have a total of 400 new students with a family income of less than £25,000 and 88 scholarships to award. We would award scholarships to all care leavers, typically an average of 3 new entrants per year. Of the remaining potentially eligible students, we might expect 100 to have exceeded our entry requirements. We would then rank order those 100 scholarship candidates according to how far up the index of multiple deprivation their home address featured. The remaining scholarships would be awarded to those with home addresses in the most deprived areas.

Form of the scholarship

For part-time students, the scholarship will take the form of a fee waiver, as no other form of assistance is permissible under the scheme. The amount of the scholarship will be determined by the intensity of study being undertaken in the first academic year of the course, paid on a pro rata basis accordingly, e.g.:

Year 1 Study intensity = 25%
 NSP fee waiver = £3,000 X 25% = £750

SECTION C:

FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STUDENTS CONTINUING ON COURSES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN 2013/14 WHICH BEGAN BEFORE 1ST SEPTEMBER 2012, INCLUDING BA (HONS) 'END-ON' STUDENTS

This section refers to arrangements for students continuing their FdA and BA/BSc (Hons) programmes in 2013/14 who began their programme (including any transfer of studies) before 1st September 2012. This section is relevant to students commencing a BA/BSc (Hons) 'end-on' programme after 1st September 2012 in the academic year immediately following the award of an FdA or equivalent qualification for a course which began before 1st September 2012, with no change in mode of study.

C1. Tuition fees, student numbers, and fee increases in subsequent years

C1.1 Tuition Fees:

BG proposes to charge the following fees to existing students on undergraduate programmes in 2013/14:

Programme:	Fee: (to be confirmed)
FdA	£1699
BA/BSc (Hons)	£3465

Foundation Degree students

The full-time equivalent FdA fee is below £3,465 and no Access Agreement is required for these programmes, in accordance with OFFA guidance. The provisions set out within this Access Agreement are not applicable to FdA programmes, with the exception of those students who entered higher education from a care background (see 2 (iii) for details of the enhanced bursary package).

'End-on' students:

Students starting BA/BSc (Hons) 'end-on' programmes will fall under the arrangements in this section if:

From September 2012:

- a) the gap between the end of the programme in which they gained their lower qualification (e.g., an FdA) and the new programme is not greater than the long vacation at the end of the academic year, and
- b) the 'end-on' programme will have the same mode of study as the lower qualification, i.e. part-time to part-time, or full-time to full-time; and
- c) the course leading to the lower qualification began before 1st September 2012

Part-time students

Part-time BA/BSc (Hons) students will be charged a pro rata amount of the variable fee (£578.00 per 20 credit module in 2013/14) to ensure a comparable rate with full-time students. On the same basis, part-time foundation degree students will be charged a pro rata fee of (£425.00 per 30 credit module).

The financial support arrangements set out in this part of the Access Agreement are **not applicable** to students registered on part-time programmes.

C1.2 Student numbers:

NUMBER OF ESTIMATED PROGRESSIONS AT EACH FEE LEVEL:

	HEFCE	TA
BA/BSc (Hons)	467	111

C1.3 Fee increases in subsequent years:

All fees will usually be subject to annual increases, usually in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate (current at the time of the increase), in order to maintain their value in real terms. BG reserves the right to review its fees for all its programmes for 2014-15 within the limits set by OFFA. Information about fee levels will be clearly communicated to students at the earliest opportunity, as indicated in section H below.

C2. Financial Support

The University College subscribes to the model bursary scheme as devised by UUK/SCOP (SCOP now GuildHE) for the purpose of providing the poorest students with an annual bursary of at least £347 subject to parliamentary approval (for students who started their courses before 1st September 2012).

Details of our bursary schemes and related support are given below:

- i) Undergraduate students paying a fee of £3,465 whose household income (as determined by SFE) is £25,000 or below in 2012/13 will receive a non-repayable bursary of up to £650, dependent upon the level of household income.
- ii) PGCE students paying a fee of £3,465 whose household income (as determined by SFE) is £25,000 or below in 2011/12 will receive a non-repayable bursary of £347.

Household Income £s	Bursary Rates	
	FT BA/BSc (Hons)	FT PGCE
0 – 18,360	£650	£347
18,361 – 25,000	£400	£347
25,001 and above	£0	£0

- iii) BG guarantees an annual minimum University College Bursary of £3,600 for undergraduate students who are care leavers with a household income (as determined by their Local Authority income assessment) of £25,000 or below in 2010/11. This bursary is available **each year** of their undergraduate programme subject to an annual household income assessment. The amount of the bursary will increase each year in line with inflation. The Student Support Team will also direct students in receipt of this bursary towards additional sources of income. The financial support identified in this section is part of a broader package of support for care leavers.
- iv) The bursaries are paid electronically directly into the student's bank account. A bursary is available **each year** of an undergraduate programme subject to an annual household income assessment. The amount of the bursary will usually increase each year in line with inflation. Any exceptions are noted in section 1.
- v) A discretionary bursary fund managed by the Student Support Team allows the University College to offer further assistance to any student whose financial hardship remains unresolved, usually after seeking financial support from all other sources, including the Access to Learning Fund. This is in recognition of the fact that financial deterrents to progression into and within higher education are not only associated with variable fees.

The bursary scheme is available to all eligible students ordinarily resident in England.

**SECTION D:
EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND RETENTION MEASURES**

BG has a high proportion of students from under-represented groups. In 2011/12, 71% of entrants were from backgrounds with household incomes of £42,600 or less, 52% from backgrounds with household incomes of £25,000 or less. HESA benchmarks have regularly been met or exceeded year on year in terms of numbers of disabled students, students from state schools, and students from low participation neighbourhoods, see the table below:

	Performance Indicators 2010-2011			Performance Indicators 2009-2010			Performance Indicators 2008-2009			Performance Indicators 2007-2008		
	Actual (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location- adjusted Benchmark	Actual (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location- adjusted Benchmark	Actual (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location- adjusted Benchmark	Actual (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location- adjusted Benchmark
State Schools (young entrants)	97.9	96.0	97.0	97.4	95.5	95.9	98.0	94.8	95.6	97.6	94.6	95.3
Lower Social Class (young entrants)	40.8	37.8	39.7	35.1	36.5	37.6	40.4	40.7	40.4	53.1	36.5	37.8
Lower Participation Neighbourhoods (young entrants)	16.8	13.2	15.2	18.4	13.0	16.0	20.2	13.1	16.4	15.5	12.3	15.1
Students in receipt of DSA (full-time first degree)	4.4*	5.5	-	6.1	5.2	-	6.7	5.0	-	7.7	4.5	-
Mature students (full-time first degree)	8.9	8.1	10.1	6.3	5.4	6.1	7.6	8.6	8.6	15.4	9.2	10.7

*this statistic is subject to a data validation check - data resubmitted to HESA May 2012

Subject to the resubmission of the 2010/11 Students in receipt of DSA (full-time first degree) data, there have been only 3 instances where a sector benchmark has not been met or exceeded by BG since Access Agreements were introduced (Lower Social Class (young entrants) in 2009-10, and Mature students (full-time first degree) in 2008-09 and 2010-11.

With an overall record of highly successful recruitment of students from under-represented groups already so firmly established, and in light of the guidance published by OFFA, the university college proposes to spend 15% of its additional fee income on widening participation measures to promote access and retention of students from under-represented groups.

SECTION E: ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

E1. Outreach

BG has delivered a highly successful outreach programme in recent years and is committed to maintaining core activities and expanding the scope of the programme in order to maximise participation from target groups. We continuously monitor the effectiveness of these programmes and stay abreast of national research into what works.

Our Schools and Colleges Liaison team will continue to expand the delivery of impartial activities aimed at promoting participation in higher education, rather than direct recruitment to BG. These include:

6th Form Conferences - specifically targeting the needs of students in the local area, including; BAME groups; mature learners; vocational learners; males into primary teaching involving 374 students from 6 colleges in Lincolnshire in 2011/12.

Outreach Presentations - delivered each year in collaboration with an average of 43 schools on all aspects of HE, targeting under-represented groups such as BAME

Next Steps 4 Study - a targeted outreach programme working with Y12/13 students from 17 partnership schools

First Steps 2 Study - modelled on our established 'Next Steps 4 Study' this programme will contribute to the legacy of AimHigher through the introduction of outreach and campus visit days in Y9, 10 and 11 students at 15 partner schools

We will further develop links with schools and colleges, continuing to value an impartial approach as we broaden our range of activity as a means to maximise the opportunities available to those considering higher education.

Targeted Support for Looked After Children through JUMP (Joint Universities Mentoring Project), a mentoring scheme for looked after children provided by HE students, operated in collaboration between local authority, community and university partners.

HELOA membership - fostering a network of best practice and up to date information amongst regional HEIs

Additional staff members in the Schools and Colleges Liaison team enhance the University College's outreach and aspiration-raising work with a particular focus on targeting local areas where progression to HE is low and maintaining or improving current recruitment levels from the poorest families. Activities include campus events, curriculum workshops, and visits to targeted schools and colleges. Work is also undertaken to support the recruitment of students from other groups currently under-represented at the University College, e.g. those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. The total annual cost of additional staffing and consumables in the first year was approximately £42,500. The level of staff dedicated to widening participation outreach work was increased by 100%, and there has been a comparable increase in the number of activities realised through this work.

E2. Student retention and success

BG's existing retention strategy is a fully holistic approach to supporting students through their programmes of study, achieved through the development of effective partnership working between academic staff and professional support services such as Student Support, Learning Advice, and the Careers Service. Students are able to access

a robust personal tutor system, specialist learning advice and a professional Student Support service and receive individualised support for personal, academic and professional development. We are committed to further developing a holistic approach to supporting student retention and success and will continue to develop the services outlined above. In addition, it is expected that further work will include:

Enhancements to our Student Support Service through investment in new facilities (due in 2012/13) which will enable more effective support to vulnerable students and those with access needs.

Employability – the BG Employability Award continues to be developed as a means for students to capture the employability skills gained during their course, through volunteering, and extra-curricular activity etc.

Enhancements to our Learning Advice service through developing on-line study support materials, and investment in new facilities.

Further development of ‘in-course’ study skills support through embedding the teaching and learning of study skills within discipline-specific modules

Use of Data to track the progress of students within targeted groups. This will be supported by our newly appointed Data Manager.

SECTION F: TARGETS AND MILESTONES

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Success indicators to be used</i>
To continue to recruit state school entrants at a level that exceeds the HESA benchmark.	BG to recruit 300 or more state school entrants annually.
To maintain very high recruitment levels of students from social classes 4 to 7.	BG to recruit 105 or more students from social classes 4 to 7 annually.
To maintain high levels of recruitment from low income groups.	Current recruitment of new students from low income households (those who receive maximum state support) maintained annually (468 students according to HEBSS data).
To improve recruitment of disabled students.	BG to recruit and retain 65 or more students in receipt of DSA annually
To improve the application, offer rate and recruitment of students from black and minority ethnic groups.	BG performance to exceed locally adjusted benchmark (1.2%) by recruiting and retaining at least 24 black and minority ethnic students
To maintain high levels of retention with an increasingly diverse student population.	BG's non-continuation rate not to exceed 30 new entrants annually
To recruit students from care.	To maintain recruitment of 3 or more students from care annually
To recruit males into primary teaching programmes	To achieve above the national average male recruitment into primary teaching programmes (16%) by recruiting and retaining at least 65 males
To provide high quality information, support and operational efficiency in the University College's operation of the Access Agreement.	Achieve annual student satisfaction levels of at least 85% in 2013/14

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ITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

The University College Senior Leadership Team formally monitors BG's fulfilment of this Agreement. This Group will consider progress made towards the milestones shown above. In addition, it will consider feedback from students on the new bursary schemes and the new student support systems. The Access Agreement is overseen and kept under review by the Finance, Employment and General Purposes Committee of the Board of Governors. Annual monitoring reports will be considered by the Diversity and Equality Committee. In addition, the Widening Participation Group monitors all operational activity in relation to the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment and will also monitor relevant activities in relation to the Access Agreement.

It is also worth noting that in a very small University College Community the effectiveness of the support arrangements in place for students and prospective students from disadvantaged groups is directly visible, on a personalised basis, to key staff as students are known to us as individuals. Illustrative of this point is that our Head of Student Support, who personally advises individual students on financial matters as a significant part of his role, has been the staff member who has led on the preparation of this agreement.

SECTION H: PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

BG's tuition fees (with appropriate disclaimers) are set out on our website and in our prospectus, together with information about financial support available to students.

The website provides the means of keeping prospective students, their parents/carers and their advisers up-to-date with on-going developments in relation to student finance.

BG's Student Support Team provides a range of services designed to help applicants and students understand new fee and funding arrangements and to develop appropriate strategies to manage their finances.

These include:

Information about fees, loans, grants, and bursaries

Practical advice from experienced money advisers who will provide one-to-one support on budgeting effectively and financial capability;

Money Management workshops for prospective and current students covering budgeting and strategies to manage limited budgets;

advisers available to prospective and current students for one-to-one consultations in person, by e-mail or by telephone.

One-to-one support, finance workshops and other supportive activities organised by the University College are made available to all our students.

SECTION I: STUDENT CONSULTATION

BG's student body has representation at all committee and governing body meetings. These forums provide opportunities for students to make a direct contribution to governance and operational matters throughout the academic year, including matters relating to widening participation, equality and diversity, and other issues relevant to this Access Agreement.

BG's Students' Union has been consulted over the development of this Access Agreement and has indicated it is satisfied the information it contains upholds BG's ethos of supporting its students. In addition,

the Students' Union has commented on the contribution it makes to BG's commitment to widening access and the equality agenda:

"BG's Access Agreement exists to promote widening participation and access for all students.

BG's Students' Union is fully committed to widening participation, engagement and open access, offering a wide range of support, sign posting and welfare services to all students. BGSU prides itself on open and transparent democratic processes. All opportunities and events are conducted and provided with students in mind.

Students are at the heart of everything the Union does, it is run by students, for students and focusses on representation. BGSU is accessible at all levels to give power and a voice to all students, from council meetings, school boards, governing body and everything in between."

SECTION J: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

BG's Access Agreement exists to promote widening participation of under-represented groups in Higher Education. The access measures outlined within this document provide support to students who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

The recruitment of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students, and disabled students are priority targets, together with addressing a more proportionate gender balance on initial teacher training courses.

BG's programme of outreach activities regularly utilises its student ambassador scheme. This provides an opportunity to promote the successful engagement of students with protected characteristics as an aspiration raising strategy for young people at schools and colleges participating in our outreach programme.

Similarly, our financial support targets students from low participation neighbourhoods, and low income backgrounds - factors which are reported (by OFFA) to coincide with disability and minority ethnicity in particular. Additional financial support is targeted at students whose circumstances include additional costs associated with childcare, ensuring we offer support on issues relating to pregnancy, maternity and marriage. Disability related costs including diagnostic testing, and support not covered by Disabled Students Allowances are also considered through BG's Discretionary Fund.

This document forms part of BG's widening participation strategy and serves to reinforce the aims of our equality and diversity policies.

