

## 1. Our commitment to widening access

Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln is 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 regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or disability. The University College is committed to widening access and aims to encourage applications from all communities, particularly those currently under-represented in higher education generally and at Bishop Grosseteste specifically.

## 2. Our student population

We have been successful in recruiting students from the state sector, low socio-economic groups and low participation backgrounds as shown in the HESA Performance Indicators table below. These figures indicate continued performance at or above location-adjusted benchmarks over this period of time.

	Performance Indicators 2008-2009			Performance Indicators 2007-2008			Performance Indicators 2006-2007		
	Actual (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location- adjusted Benchmark	Actual (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location- adjusted Benchmark	Actual (%)	Benchmark (%)	Location- adjusted Benchmark
State Schools (young entrants)	98.0	94.8	95.6	97.6	94.6	95.3	100.0	94.6	95.3
Lower Social Class (young entrants)	40.4	40.7	40.4	53.1	36.5	37.8	43.0	34.2	37.7
Lower Participation Neighbourhoods (young entrants)	20.2	13.1	16.4	15.5	12.3	15.1	15.9	10.7	14.3

These groups continue to be central to our Widening Participation Strategy.

When we introduced our Access Agreement in 2004/2005, of the undergraduate student population at BG:

- 44% received full contribution grant (household income less than £21,000)
- 21% received partial contribution grant (household income between £21,001 and £32,000)
- 35% paid fees in full (household incomes £32,001 and above)

Our Access Agreement builds on existing strategies to maintain strong recruitment and retention from low income groups.

The recruitment of students from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups has continued to be a challenge for the University College. The current student population has less than 2% from these groups. Whilst recognising the challenge posed by the geographical

location of the University College (Lincolnshire has one of the lowest BME populations in the UK - 1.3%, and around 50% of our current student population come from the county), there is a commitment to continue to undertake work to increase participation from BME groups and to enhance facilities and services to support students from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

The HESA Performance Indicators 2008/09 show improved recruitment of students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance - 6.7% against a benchmark of 5.0%. Strategies will continue to be implemented to raise the awareness of improved facilities and support amongst potential students.

The University College has continued to achieve high retention rates year on year, exceeding the HESA benchmark. Figures for 2008/09 show a non-continuation rate of 6.9% compared with the benchmark of 7.7%.

This achievement has taken place within the context of students entering BG from an ever-widening range of backgrounds. However, we are not content to rest on this historical record. Given the University College's commitment to recruit increasing numbers of students from diverse backgrounds, it is acknowledged that maintaining high levels of retention will be challenging. Accordingly, our financial plan includes investment in staff and resources to enhance our support of students.

### **3. Fee levels**

For 2011/12, BG will charge a tuition fee of £3,375 a year for most full-time undergraduate programmes. An exception applies to BG's foundation degree programmes, for which the tuition fee will be £1,655. Students on foundation degrees will not be eligible for the bursaries described in 4(i), with the exception of care leavers, who will qualify for an enhanced bursary package - see 4(ii).

Part-time BA/BSc (Hons) students will be charged a pro rata amount of the variable fee (£563 per 20 credit module in 2011/12) 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 £276 per 20 credit module.

For 2011/12, the tuition fee for full-time PGCE Primary, and PGCE Secondary programmes will be £3,375. The fee for part-time PGCE students will be £3,375 payable in instalments of 25% per term over the first four terms of the programme. Full-time PGCE students will be eligible for the bursaries described in 4(ii) and will have access to the BG Discretionary Fund.

In recognition that the maximum fee grant available to part-time students is insufficient to cover the total cost of the tuition fees, we will offer additional financial support through the University College's Access to Learning Fund to assist students from low income backgrounds.

The University College will apply only such increases to the tuition fee as are approved by the relevant government bodies.

### **4. Use of additional fee income**

A separate finance sheet provides details of the University College's use of additional fees to support access measures.

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 £338 (for 2011/12 entrants).

A survey of student satisfaction regarding the bursary scheme in 2008/09 showed students were extremely satisfied with the University College's Bursary Scheme. 94% of students who received a bursary were satisfied with the information and advice they received about the scheme provided by the University College; 96% thought the level of support they received from the University College was satisfactory; and 98% were satisfied the University College had acted pro-actively to ensure they received their bursary payments on time. Given this feedback, we have retained all the core elements of our bursary scheme.

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

- i) Undergraduate new-entrant students paying a fee of £3,375 whose household income (as determined by their Student Finance England/Wales/N. Ireland or SAAS income assessment) is £25,000 or below in 2011/12 will receive a non-repayable bursary of up to £650, dependent upon the level of household income as follows:

Household Income £s	Bursary Rates	
	FT BA/BSc (Hons)	FT PGCE
0 - 18,360	£650	£338
18,361 - 25,000	£400	£338
25,001 and above	0	0

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. Any exceptions are noted in section 3.

- ii) PGCE students paying a fee of £3,375 whose household income (as determined by their Student Finance England/Wales/N.Ireland or SAAS income assessment) is £25,000 or below in 2011/12 will receive a non-repayable bursary of £338.
- 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, such as the £1,000 Foyer Accommodation Bursary available via the Access to Learning Fund. 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.

- 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.
- vi) Additional staff have been appointed to the Widening Participation Team to enhance the University College's current 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 has been increased by 100%, and it is expected that there will be a comparable increase in the number of people reached through this work.

The bursary schemes are available to all eligible students ordinarily resident in the UK. The University College will take note of legal developments relating to the potential obligation to provide support to non-UK EU students and will act appropriately.

## **5. Provision of information to students**

The University College's fees (with appropriate disclaimers) are set out on our website and in our prospectus, together with information about bursaries and other financial support.

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.

Our Student Support Team provides a range of services designed to help applicants and students to understand the new fee and bursary 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.

## 6. 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 performance to exceed the HESA location-adjusted benchmark annually.
To maintain very high recruitment levels of students from social classes 4 to 7.	BG performance to exceed the HESA location-adjusted benchmark annually.
To maintain high levels of recruitment from low income groups.	Current percentage of new students from low income households (those who receive maximum state support) maintained annually.
To improve recruitment of disabled students.	BG performance to exceed the HESA benchmark annually.
To improve the application, offer rate and recruitment of students from black and minority ethnic groups.	Achieve student intake target of 4.6%.
To maintain high levels of retention with an increasingly diverse student population.	BG performance to exceed the HESA location-adjusted benchmark annually.
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 84% in 2010/11.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

The University College monitors its fulfilment of this Agreement to the Senior Leadership Team. 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 will be a standing item on the agenda for the Finance, Employment and General Purposes Committee of the Board of Governors. Annual monitoring reports will be considered by the Diversity and Equality Committee.