

University of Chester

Office for Fair Access (OFFA) Access Agreement 2011



University of
Chester

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Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access – 2011

1. Background

The University of Chester has an established commitment to widening participation and works proactively to extend opportunities to participate successfully in higher education to young people and adults from groups or backgrounds where this is not traditionally a considered option.

The University underpins its work in this area with a commitment to high quality learning and teaching and to the provision of strong support services to include, retain and develop successful learners who may have diverse entry profiles.

The University of Chester has major campuses in Chester and Warrington which draw on a wide range of socio-economic groups and operates a bursary scheme in order further to encourage applications from students of limited means.

2. Full-time tuition fees

For 2011-12, the University of Chester will charge a tuition fee of £3,375 for new self-financing students on all full-time undergraduate courses. Partner organisations of the University of Chester may also charge a tuition fee up to this level for these courses.

3. Amounts of additional fee income to be spent on access measures

The University intends to spend an estimated 15% of the revenue that accrues from additional fee income on a combination of bursaries and outreach activities designed to widen participation and support students from low level income groups or backgrounds under-represented higher education.

The University will continue to provide a wide range of activities, services and support related to widening access, using a proportion of its HEFCE grant income to resource, at subject, department and University level, outreach activities aimed at groups of potential students with backgrounds traditionally less likely to consider higher education as an option, as outlined in its Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA). The University will in future aim to maintain its previous levels of targeted outreach activity through use of additional tuition fee income.

4. University of Chester Bursaries

Maintenance Bursaries

Undergraduates

For students with residual household income of less than £25,000, the University will supplement the Higher Education Maintenance Grant received by the bursary entitlement of £338.

Over and above this commitment to these students, the University wishes to continue to support students with lower levels of income and who are under-represented in higher education nationally. It therefore operates a further bursary scheme, targeted at those with most need.

Students are assessed on the basis of income and receive the following bursary if their residual household income level is less than £25,000. For English-domiciled students, this income level threshold is the same as that for the full state support grant.

HE Maintenance Grant Entitlement	University of Chester Bursary	Income Level
£2906	£500 (includes mandatory £338)	Less than £25,000

Bursary allocations will be determined using Student Loans Company data. All full-time UK students liable to pay the full tuition fee of £3,375 who are studying on courses funded by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, and who have an income level of less than £25,000, will be eligible for the maintenance bursary scheme.

All maintenance bursaries will be paid as bursary grants and not as fee waivers. For eligible learners studying at the University, the mandatory element of the bursary (£338) will be paid in cash and the remainder by card credit to eligible students, redeemable against purchase of books, computers and other products on sale in the bookshop on the Chester campus.

Payments will normally be made twice per year, in two instalments.

For eligible students in partner organisations charging the full fee of £3,375, all payments will be made in cash.

PGCE

The University of Chester commits itself to supplementing the maintenance grant of £2,906 received by students from lowest level income groups by a sum of £338 paid in cash.

5. Part-time tuition fees

Part-time fees vary, but for self-financing students are normally pro rata to the full-time fee.

The University does not as part of its access agreement provide bursaries for part-time students. However, the University is extending its outreach and networking activities with local partners to promote progression routes and HE opportunities for potential applicants who (a) are undertaking vocational and/or employment-linked pathways and (b) have educational or socio-demographic backgrounds associated with low participation in HE.

6. Outreach work

Detailed targets and milestones for outreach work are set out in the University's Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA). These will be reviewed and further updated as part of the WPSA monitoring exercise. The University has a recently-established Outreach Office, which in 2011 will lead in the development and delivery of the institution's targeted events, activities and progression links for schools and colleges.

7. Milestones

The University's PIs for the years 2006/7, 2007/08 and 2008/09, as published by HESA, are shown below:

		Chester 06/07	Bench- mark 06/07	Chester 07/08	Bench- mark 07/08	Chester 08/09	Bench- mark 08/09
Young full-time first degree entrants	From state schools or colleges	96.6	92.2	96.8	92.2	97.5	93.9
	From NS-SEC classes 4,5,6 & 7	36.4	34.1	36.1	34.1	39.2	37.6
	From low participation neighbourhoods	12.9	10.7	15.4	11.2	13.5	12.1
Young full-time undergraduate entrants –all	From state schools or colleges	96.7	92.4	96.7	92.5	97.6	94.4
	From NS-SEC classes 4,5,6 & 7	36.7	34.4	36.0	34.6	40.2	39
	From low participation neighbourhoods	13.7	11.2	16.6	12.0	14.5	12.8
Mature full-time first degree entrants	With no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhood	16.0	12.3	19.6	13.5	15.1	12.9
Mature full-time undergraduate entrants –all	With no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhood	17.9	14.3	19.8	13.9	17.8	13.9

*Based on POLAR 2 data for low participation neighbourhoods
2007/08 and 2008/09 NS-SEC data not strictly comparable*

The University monitors these trends and undertakes detailed analyses of the data underlying performance against these and other indicators.

A full summary of the University's institutional targets and milestones for widening participation is given within its Widening Participation Strategic Assessment 2009-12. These milestones will be reviewed and further updated as part of the WPSA monitoring exercise.

Updated November 2010