

## **Dearne Valley College Access Agreement 2009-2013**

### **1. The College**

Dearne Valley College provides FE, WBL and HE education and training to the communities of Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster, with a specific focus on the communities of the Dearne Valley, situated in South Yorkshire. These areas have endured acute economic deprivation over the last 20 years (Massam, 2003). In the last National Index of Deprivation, 34 Enumeration Districts in Rotherham MBC fell within the top 7 per cent nationally with seven of these within the college's immediate catchment area. These wards play a key part in each borough's strategy to improve social and economic regeneration. They also comprise areas which have the extremely low HE participation rates compared to the rest of the country

Whilst the wards and areas concerned have received significant ESF funding to support economic, education and social infrastructure improvements there is still a long way for the HE participation rates to move to compare favourably with the national participation rates. Only 18% of employees of the workforce in the Dearne Valley have higher level skills compared to the 40% of an equally sized employed population nationally.

Dearne Valley College had in 2007-2008 over 1350 full-time further education learners, 2500 part-time learners, over 350 learners participating in work based learning 188 Higher Education students. The College has currently recruited 205 higher education students in 2008-2009, of which approximately 136 are full-time. Five of the seven HE programmes are Edexcel HE provision (4 HND and 1 HNC), with the other two being a Certificate in Education (TQFE), a Foundation Degree in Sports Coaching and a Foundation Degree in Early Years due to start in January 2009..

Over the next two years the college is committed to meeting the challenge of widening participation whilst engaging employers through the migration from HND/HNC Edexcel HE qualifications to Foundation Degrees with partner HEIs and supported by Higher Futures (SYLLN). This is a key aim of the college's HE Strategy. The resulting full and part time Foundation Degrees will be based upon the needs expressed by local employers, regional SSC priorities and local/sub-regional development agencies. It is anticipated that this growth will be through directly funded HEFCE provision using ASNs targeted at employer engagement.

The majority of HE students recruited onto full time HE programmes are existing Dearne Valley College FE students who have progressed internally and live within the catchment area of the college.

**This Access Agreement is for the period of 4 years from September 2009 to September 2013 and subject to reasonable adjustment for inflation.**

### **2. The Agreement**

Level of fees

- The level of fee will be £2,052 for 2009-2010. The fee will increase by the announced Government's inflationary increase in subsequent years based on the previous year level. This is set out Section 4, with a projected increase of 2.5% for future years. This fee will apply to all new students on full-time HEFCE funded Foundation Degree and Edexcel HE programmes from 2009-2010.

- **The fee does not apply to Part Time HNC students**, who are not covered within this access agreement, **and Certificate in Education students** where the fee is determined by the Consortium for Post Compulsory Teacher Training **and all existing full time Year 2 Foundation Degree and Edexcel students in 2009-2010.**

Bursaries and other financial support for students

Qualifying Criteria		Bursary
1	All full time HE students who have progressed from Dearne Valley Education Partnership institutions OR	£300.00 in each year of full time study
2	All full time HE students who have progressed from a South Yorkshire College or Sixth Form institution	

**The maximum bursary for a full time student is £600.00 over the duration of their programme, usually 2 years.**

The Bursary will be paid in 3 instalments:

1. First Instalment in late October
2. Second Instalment in February
3. Third Instalment in late April

The tuition fee set by Dearne Valley College ensures that the cost of HE study at the college is not a barrier to those students who are committed and capable of HE study.

Additional income derived from increased tuition fees will be used to support and encourage those learners who would not otherwise progress onto HE, improve the learning experience of HE students at Dearne Valley College and support career development/progression resulting from HE achievement at the college.

We will review participation of under-represented learners in the Dearne Valley and developing outreach activities that promote awareness of and access to HE study.

### **3. Provision of Information to Students**

Fee information and details of the bursaries will be made available to all prospective HE students throughout the information, application and recruitment process. It will clearly explain HE tuition fees and the bursary scheme alongside other financial information, advice and guidance for prospective HE students.

This information will be provided in a range of mediums and state the annual and aggregate fees for the HE programme, bursary arrangements and other financial support i.e. Student Loans and local authority means tested and non-means tested bursaries. This will allow prospective students to foresee levels of debt incurred resulting from fees by the end of the course. The information will be provided via:

- The College website
- Higher Education prospectus
- College HE and IAG staff
- Student Support Services at the College
- Aim Higher careers events with our local partner institutions and schools

- Internal briefings to level 2 and 3 learners through progression sessions, particularly level 3 learners
- All appropriate Aim Higher Events for prospective/interested learners, parents and external agencies
- Open Evenings, HE advice sessions and HE interviews

#### 4. Higher Education Fee Income, Outreach Work and HE Student Activities

Dearne Valley College currently undertakes significant HE outreach work with schools and FE partners in the Dearne Valley and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. Both the Dearne Valley and north Rotherham have a significant number of wards with high levels of social and economic deprivation that have been adversely affected through the demise of the coal and steel industries.

The college has been funded by Higher Futures to support HE IAG and outreach work with curriculum based HE development staff, but this funding is due to end in July 2009. The college will need through the migration to Foundation degrees to promote and run a significant number of awareness raising events and activities in the community, local schools and at the college.

Many of the pre-18 activities currently taking place with level 2 and level 3 college learners are partly funded through Aim Higher. The HE development of Foundation degrees will require additional resources to ensure that there is buy-in from learners, the local community and employers. The investment in additional outreach activities and resources will be used to enhance the existing activities and increase awareness of the benefits of higher education study and the resulting professional/career opportunities that arise.

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Annual Tuition Fee	£2052.00	£2103.00	£2156.00	£2210.00
DVC Bursary based upon the 2 criteria set above	£300.00	£300.00	£350.00	£350.00

The fee income and expenditure against outreach and HE student activities can be found in annexe 1 of the Access Agreement

#### 5. Milestones:

<b>October 2008</b>	Publish Higher Education and Bursary Scheme
<b>September 2009</b>	Outreach activities and resources available for implementation
<b>September 2009</b>	Introduce 2 new Foundation Degrees
<b>October 2009</b>	Increase applications from vocational Level 3 learners living in the Dearne valley and Rotherham by 10%
<b>October 2009</b>	HE Bursary Scheme Updated – Fees reviewed for 2010-2011
<b>October 2009</b>	Expanded programme of HE outreach activities – focus on Foundation degree awareness with prospective learners, communities and employers
<b>September 2010</b>	Introduce 2 new Foundation Degrees
<b>October 2010</b>	HE Bursary Scheme Updated – Fees reviewed for 2011-2012
<b>July 2011</b>	Retention on full-time Foundation Degree courses to rise by 10% and success rates to increase by 5%. (Compared to a baseline of 2006-2007 of 71% and 44% for HNDs and HNC)

- September 2011** Increase the number of HE students to 237 (excluding 30 undertaking Huddersfield University Certificate in Education provision) in line with the HE Strategy
- September 2011** Increased by 15% Dearne valley College Level 3 vocational progression (2007-2008 baseline of 80)

## **6. Monitoring Arrangements**

The Academic Partnership Manager will present an annual report to the college Academic Board on the progress towards the milestones. Monitoring information will also be contained in the Higher education Self Assessment Report (SAR) that reports on the whole college HE provision, with curriculum area SAR sub-grades and judgements relating to specific curriculum issues and developments.

Action plans will outline areas for development and improvement at a college and curriculum level. These are monitored by the Head of Standards & Development and the Vice Principal for Curriculum & Standards. The evidence and issues also are reported in the college SAR and resulting action plan.

Changes in HE fees and bursaries will be approved by the College's Governors Finance and General Purposes Committee.