

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACCESS AGREEMENT

Introduction

1. The mission of Harper Adams University College is 'higher education for the delivery of a sustainable food chain and rural economy'. Its vision is to maintain a high quality University College made distinctive by activities closely related to the needs of the rural economy, a learning environment and student culture that enhance employability and strong industry links that add business relevance to the College's role in higher education and which encourage lifelong learning.
2. The University College has about 1220 full time undergraduate students. First degree and HND/Foundation Degree programmes are offered at the University College's campus near Newport in Shropshire. Harper Adams is directly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for about 120 students studying on its validated HND/Foundation Degree courses at Reaseheath College in Nantwich, Cheshire. It is these programmes that are the subject of this Access Agreement.
3. Harper Adams also validates courses delivered at Warwickshire College. In this case Warwickshire College is directly funded by HEFCE and consequently Warwickshire College has prepared its own Access Agreement to cover these, and its other, students.

Tuition Fees

4. In December 2004, the Board of Governors at Harper Adams University College agreed the following annual tuition fee rates for UK and EU students joining full time/sandwich undergraduate courses at both Harper Adams University College and Reaseheath College in 2006/07:

First degree (BSc/BEng/MEng)	£3,000
HND/Foundation Degree	£2,600
Placement year for all courses	£ 850

5. Tuition fees will be subject to annual inflationary increases in 2007/08 and beyond.
6. Gap year students, who defer their places before 1 August 2005 and start courses in September 2006, will not have to pay the fees listed in paragraph 4 above. Instead they will be asked to contribute to the standard tuition fee, £1,175 in 2004/05, depending on the level of their household income.
7. The University College has separate tuition fee rates for its part time and postgraduate courses and for overseas fee paying students. Information about tuition fee rates is available directly from the University College.

Scholarships

8. Harper Adams University College will use a proportion of the additional fee income to offer scholarships to students, in order to promote access and encourage participation in higher education from under-represented groups. The University College has previously offered a very limited scholarship scheme, with about £10,000 per year allocated to scholarships to students from under-represented groups. The scholarship arrangements outlined in this Access

agreement will replace the University College's existing scholarship scheme, with effect for the 2006/07 academic year.

9. The University College subscribes to the model scheme devised by the Universities UK (UUK)/Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) advisory group. In particular the University College intends to use the information that it will receive from the Student Loans Company on the residual income of applicants as the basis on which scholarships will be awarded to students.
10. The University College will award an annual non-repayable scholarship of £1,000 to all students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant (£2,700 in 2006/07). The University College anticipates that 40% of its students will receive both the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant and a University College scholarship of £1,000. Students will receive confirmation of the award of a scholarship within 5 working days of the University College receiving suitable evidence that a student is entitled to the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant.
11. About 20% of students at Harper Adams University College are expected to receive a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant. Students in receipt of a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant will also receive a non-repayable University College scholarship. The University College will award scholarships at two levels of £750 and £500. Students with a household income between £17,501 - £28,000 will receive a scholarship of £750 and students with a household income between £28,001 - £37,425 will receive a scholarship of £500. Students will receive confirmation of the award of a scholarship within 5 working days of the University College receiving suitable evidence that a student is entitled to a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant.
12. All scholarships will be paid to students, by cheque, in two equal instalments. The first payment will be made in December and the second payment in February.
13. Students who receive a scholarship in the first year of study will continue to receive a scholarship for the remaining years of study at Harper Adams University College, provided that they remain registered on a full time/sandwich course, they continue to meet the criteria for the award of a scholarship and pass all modules of study in the preceding year, after reassessment. Students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant and who are allowed to progress into the next level of a programme 'carrying' one or more failed modules from the previous level of study or who are repeating a part or a full year of study, will be awarded a Harper Adams scholarship of £300. The University College will consider, on a discretionary basis, whether a student repeating some or all of the previous year's studies or carrying failed modules into the next level of study will be eligible for a scholarship. Students will not normally be eligible for a scholarship during the placement year.
14. The value of scholarships paid to students will increase each year in line with inflation.
15. The University College also intends to offer scholarships to reward students' academic potential and sporting prowess, as well as to students who, in different ways, can enrich the learning community at Harper Adams. Similarly the University College will also offer a substantial number of subject specific scholarships to students from different parts of the UK. All such scholarships will be awarded on a 'needs blind' basis.

Information to Applicants and Students

16. The University College's approach to the introduction of differential fees and scholarships will be outlined in the 2006 undergraduate prospectus, which will be available from April 2005.
17. By September 2005, a more detailed leaflet on fees and scholarships will be produced by the University College and it will also be made available through the University College's website. This will set out the tuition fees for students from September 2006 onwards, the scholarships available to students, the criteria for the award of scholarships, how to apply (if appropriate) and methods of payment. It will also illustrate the net costs of studying for different types of students, taking account not only of living costs and fees but the financial support available from both the state and the University and likely levels of income from the placement year.
18. A copy of the College's leaflet on fees and scholarships will be sent to all potential students requesting a copy of the University College's prospectus or other study related promotional materials. Staff from the University College will also discuss the College's approach towards tuition fees and the availability of scholarships with potential students and their advisers at higher education fairs, visits to (and from) schools and colleges, and also at open days held at Harper Adams.
19. All applicants seeking admission to a course at the University College are normally interviewed at Harper Adams. During the applicant's visit to Harper Adams, there will be an opportunity to discuss the extent of the financial support that is likely to be available from the University College. Applicants who receive an offer of a place on a course at Harper Adams will also be given the contact details of staff with whom they can discuss their financial circumstances, in confidence. During the admissions process, most applicants will be given a provisional indication of the financial support, if any, that they will receive from the College. The University College will confirm any provisional offer of financial support when it receives evidence of the level of the student's entitlement to the Higher Education Maintenance Grant.
20. All staff involved in advising students during the recruitment and admissions process, at both Harper Adams and Reaseheath College, will receive substantial training on the University College's arrangements for tuition fees and scholarships. This will include staff from the Registry, the Liaison and Marketing Unit, Student Services and Finance, most academic staff as well as senior managers.
21. Information about fees and scholarships will also be made available to UCAS and the Student Loans Company (SLC), in order that students can access this information from the websites of UCAS and the SLC.

Outreach Work

22. The University College is committed to promoting access and it is already involved in a number of initiatives to encourage participation in higher education from under-represented groups. These activities include:
 - A Children's University event at Harper Adams, with 500 year 6 pupils in attendance from the local Telford and Wrekin urban area.

- A week long Summer School for 50 year 11 pupils to raise aspirations towards higher education.
 - An Easter School at the University College for local primary school pupils.
 - The Higher Education Choices event, attracting more than 250 potential students each year.
 - More than 30 visits into Harper Adams each year, from pupils and teachers at schools and colleges in the region.
 - More than 60 visits each year to schools and colleges by University College staff.
 - Membership of the Midlands post-16 compact scheme (CARD), in which students are encouraged to complete a series of goals while studying a level 3 programme in order to help them progress into higher education.
 - A mentoring project in which students from the University College E-mentor pupils from secondary schools in the Warwickshire area.
23. The University College also provides high levels of post-entry support. All new students are screened, during induction to Harper Adams, to assess whether they might be dyslexic and to gauge the extent to which they will require additional support to develop their numeracy skills. The University College employs four members of staff to provide Learner Support to students.
24. The University College will continue to work towards increasing the number of students from under-represented groups studying at Harper Adams. The University College will maintain its existing outreach work and its investment in Learner Support. However, the University College is not currently planning to increase its existing outreach and learner support work, which we believe to be appropriately resourced for an institution of this size.

Milestones and Objectives

25. Data compiled by the University College shows that 80% of its students are drawn from rural areas, with 57% from a farming background. While the University College is committed to attracting students from under-represented groups to study at Harper Adams, this needs to be seen in the context of both the specialist land-based nature of the University College's courses and its rural location in Shropshire. Both these factors might, to some extent, militate against our efforts to widen participation.
26. The milestones and objectives for the University College are set out on page 6 of this Access Agreement. The University College currently draws 61% of its full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7, far in excess of the HEFCE benchmark of 44%. Moreover, 8% of all undergraduate students are in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance, against a benchmark of 4%. The University College also has good retention rates, with 92% of first year students in 2003/04 continuing on courses in 2004/05.
27. HEFCE Performance Indicators suggest that the University College is currently less successful in drawing students from low participation neighbourhoods,

although there is some doubt about whether students from rurally isolated and disadvantaged backgrounds are correctly identified by the existing methodology.

Monitoring Arrangements

28. The Senior Management Team at the University College will monitor compliance with the Access Agreement and also progress towards meeting the milestones and objectives identified on page 6 of this Agreement, through regular reports to the College Executive. The Academic Board of the University College will also receive an annual report.

Dr N Morrison
Academic Registrar
September 2005

MILESTONES AND OBJECTIVES

	Objectives - by 2010	Milestones - by 2008	Activities	Baseline Position
1.	67% of full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7.	65% of full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued outreach work. Participation in Aimhigher initiatives. Targeted and well promoted bursaries. 	61% of full time undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classes 4-7 ¹ .
2.	12% of all undergraduate students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance.	10% of all undergraduate students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the Learner Support arrangements. Diagnostic assessment of students during induction to the College. Targeted and well promoted bursaries. 	8% of all undergraduate students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance ¹ .
3.	10% of young degree entrants drawn from low participation neighbourhoods.	7% of young degree entrants drawn from low participation neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued outreach work. Participation in Aimhigher initiatives. Targeted and well promoted bursaries. New courses attractive to urban dwellers. 	5% of young degree entrants drawn from low participation neighbourhoods ¹ .
4.	8% of mature full time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of higher education and from low participation neighbourhoods.	6% of mature full time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of higher education and from low participation neighbourhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued outreach work. Participation in Aimhigher initiatives. Targeted and well promoted bursaries. New courses attractive to urban dwellers. 	4% of mature full time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of higher education and from low participation neighbourhoods ¹ .
5.	95% progression rate from year 1 to year 2 of undergraduate courses.	94% progression rate from year 1 to year 2 of undergraduate courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted bursaries and other forms of financial support to reduce withdrawal rates on grounds of financial hardship. Effective learner support. 	92% progression rate from year 1 to year 2 of undergraduate courses ² .

¹ HESA. 2004. Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK.

² Harper Adams University College, Academic Board, 8 December 2004.