

# **NEWMAN COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

## **ACCESS AGREEMENT**

### **Introduction**

Newman College of Higher Education, Birmingham, is proud of its record in widening both access and participation. The College regularly outperforms its benchmarks for attracting students both from less advantaged backgrounds and from low participation neighbourhoods. Newman College is well situated to make a major contribution to the provision of higher education opportunities for such communities both because of its geographical location in, and close to, some of the most deprived wards in England, and because of its well established connections with schools and colleges through its teacher training and professional development programmes. The Catholic mission of Newman College also contributes to the institution's commitment to creating educational opportunities that enable human beings to reach their full potential. The institution holds the chair for AimHigher in Birmingham and Solihull.

### **Underlying Principles of the Newman College Access Agreement**

The College will work to the following principles:

- a) Quality - the College strives to offer higher education of the best possible quality to all its students and plans to use additional income to enhance quality
- b) Attractiveness and accessibility - the College will seek to provide high quality infrastructure that enables all students, including those with disabilities, to access its programmes and courses easily
- c) Fairness - in making decisions about student support, the College will take appropriate account of a broad range of factors impacting on a student's economic circumstances
- d) Inclusion – the College's scheme is underpinned by a commitment to ensuring the widest possible range of students have access to higher education
- e) Sustainability – in deciding on the best use of any additional income, the College will prioritise the development of relevant and sustainable learning opportunities
- f) Continuing excellence in widening participation – given that the College currently attracts around 48% of its students from the Government's target groups, this principle sets out our commitment to maintaining that excellent outcome. The College has good retention and progression rates ( see attached PIs for 2002-2003) but will use some of its additional income and target bursary support to ensure that these improve further.

## **Duration of Access Agreement**

The College proposes that this agreement runs for three years but will review its effectiveness annually.

## **Scope of agreement and intended fee levels**

This agreement refers mainly to full time undergraduate students. There is currently limited information relating to support for part-time students. The College does, however, confirm its commitment to the support of part-time students in a later paragraph.

The Board of Governors of Newman College of Higher Education has established that the College will set an upper fee limit of £3000. The Board has also agreed that whilst the programmes on offer to students at the College are **worth** £3000, they will not **cost** any student £3000. This is because the College wishes to sustain its excellent record in attracting less well off students.

Increases in fees will be applied where approved by the government in line with inflation

The College fee limits will be as set out below:

|                                                 |                          |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Undergraduate ITT full - time programmes        | up to £3000 per annum    |
| Postgraduate ITT full - time programmes         | up to £3000 per annum    |
| Joint and Single Honours full - time programmes | up to £3000 per annum    |
| Part-time degree programmes                     | pro rata up to £3000p.a. |
| Foundation degrees                              | pro rata up to £3000p.a. |
| Master's programmes                             | up to £300 per module    |
| Distance Learning modules                       | up to £500 per module    |

## **Access measures**

Given the current profile of Newman College students, it has been decided to provide every undergraduate student who studies at Newman College in 2006 with a Newman Foundation Bursary (NFB). This is in the spirit of the College's mission and effectively limits the fee for every programme and course to a maximum of £2700. It ensures that the minimum level of bursary

support is offered to all students on full state support. On current figures this is likely to be around 50% of our current student population. However, we expect that the majority of our students will be in receipt of some support. Continuation of this scheme for students outside this group will depend on how the market develops but it is the College's intention to offer such support to all students for the first three years. The College has, to date, not offered any sort of College bursary and so such support is all additional. Bursaries for PGCE students will continue to be offered by the TDA with a rise in bursary level from £6000 to £9000 for shortage subjects, additional support for science and maths teachers including a 'golden hello' deal, and continuing support for primary teachers at the level of £6000. Postgraduate students will also be eligible for the Newman Foundation Bursary and for some additional financial help which is related to individual circumstances.

In addition to the universal bursary measure the College will use the model bursary scheme to assess residual income and will then apply additional student bursary support for target groups in accordance with the following income bands in line with specific criteria:

|                    |                                                                |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Up to £17,500      | £300 NFB + Government support package + Band 1 Bursary         |
| £17,501 to £25,500 | £300 NFB + Partial Government support package + Band 2 bursary |
| £25,501 to £37,426 | £300 NFB + Band 3 bursary                                      |
| £37,426 and over   | £300 NFB                                                       |

### **Bursary bands**

|        |             |
|--------|-------------|
| Band 1 | up to £1000 |
| Band 2 | up to £800  |
| Band 3 | up to £500  |

All students will also be able to apply for an achievement scholarship from Year 2 onwards. The College is considering provision of a number of full fee scholarships of £3000. This lies outside the scope of this agreement.

Students whose school has been involved in compact arrangements with the College and who have attended a minimum number of outreach events either in school or in the College will also be eligible for a small learning resource grant towards the cost of books or technology.

## **Part-time students**

### **Undergraduate three year full time equivalent awards**

Newman College is particularly concerned to support part-time students on low incomes. Part-time students pay per module or group of modules for current courses. The College proposes to provide both NFB's and additional bursary support for the many low income students on such courses. The College's experience in widening participation for part-time students suggests that many experience financial hardship in relation to the payment of fees. Newman College wishes to ensure that such students are not disadvantaged by the increased fees regime. In addition, part time students will be able to access the increased fee grant of up to £1180 FTE. They will also be able to access a £250 course grant towards the costs of studying. The eligibility threshold for such fee support in full is £14,969 with a maximum income for partial fee grant of £19,625.

### **Foundation degrees**

Support for students on foundation degrees will be a key target. Part-time students on foundation degrees will become eligible for the NFB on the successful completion of three modules. In addition students who are eligible for state support will also be assessed for a pro rata bursary on College internal criteria. Caveats about further developments in relation to student support apply.

### **Assessment of eligibility**

This will be in accordance with the model bursary scheme for minimum bursary requirements. The College will use its own criteria for assessment of additional payments. These criteria are currently in development.

### **Payment of bursaries**

Students will be paid the NFB at the start of their second term in College. Other bursary support will be paid in two tranches in February and in June.

### **Deferment of payment.**

Students who choose to defer the payment of their Foundation Bursary to the end of their course will be paid £1000. This is the equivalent of three years at £300 plus a bonus of £100. Students who leave earlier than the end of the third year and take a fall back award will be able to access the bursary for the first completed year only.

## **Provision of information to students**

All prospective applicants to the College will be provided with information via the prospectus, the website and material available at Open Days, Family Evenings and College or school based AimHigher events. In addition, the College will target under represented communities through mailshots, the use of school partnership networks, compact partnerships and AimHigher programmes. Customised material will be provided for target groups. This information will be provided throughout the year. The College will develop material to provide specific advice to students and will work in conjunction with its validating university to do this. Such material will include information on the following:

- Fee levels (by programme and mode)
- Bursary availability (by income level, programme and mode)
- State support availability (by income level and programme mode)
- Accommodation costs
- Cost of living averages
- Details of SLC
- Details of LEA support lines
- Student support mechanisms
- Financial management advice
- Debt counselling and support

## **Outreach activity**

Newman College is already engaged in a wide range of outreach activity. As a smaller HEI we currently work with a small college team plus the range of local AimHigher workers. We intend to invest more substantially in staff with the appropriate expertise to support families with little experience of higher education in learning more about what higher education has to offer and how it can be planned for.

The College also intends to provide regular family events in specific schools and wards including those with a high number of students who do not currently access higher education. This will include schools in Walsall, Dudley, South West Birmingham and North Worcestershire.

The College is currently lead partner, for example, in an AimHigher programme which targets schools with fewer than 16% of students progressing into higher education and work will continue with this difficult to reach group. A key part of this work will involve links with FE partners as well as schools since often students need to be encouraged to make the level 2/level 3 leap before they consider higher education.

## **Range of additional outreach activities**

These will include:

|                                           |                    |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Master classes                            | 10 per annum       |
| Family information evenings               | 5 per annum        |
| Sixth form conferences                    | 3 per annum        |
| School based talks                        | up to 20 per annum |
| Taster days                               | 3 per department   |
| Shadow a student days                     | As requested       |
| Mentoring                                 | 150 mentors        |
| Support for Children Looked After         | 25 per annum       |
| Recruitment events for refugee families   | 2 per annum        |
| Recruitment events for traveller families | tbc                |
| Subject based Summer Schools              | Annually           |

## **Compact arrangements**

Newman College has already developed a number of compact arrangements with between schools, colleges and FE partners. These are usually tailor made for particular departments. The College intends to develop a more strategic approach to compact arrangements across the region.

## **Milestones**

This is very difficult to determine since the College is already exceeding benchmarks and currently attracts 49% of its students from lower income groups and 26% from low participation families. We intend to set a target of 50% participation from low income families in the first year but it must be noted that the impact of fees may have significant impact on the institution and we believe that in terms of risk management it is prudent to declare that we will review targets on an annual basis.

## **Monitoring of the Access Agreement**

Newman College will monitor this agreement through

- Analysis of applications, acceptances and registrations
- Evaluation of the scheme for bursary awards
- Analysis of retention data and of progression data
- HESA performance indicators
- Value for money analysis for Board of Governors

Monitoring will be the responsibility of the Academic Board (student recruitment, progress and retention). It will also be monitored by the Finance and General Purposes committee (for financial impact, costs incurred,

infrastructure impact ). An annual report will go the Board of Governors on widening access and participation which will include a report on the impact and effectiveness of the Access agreement. The Equal Opportunities committee will monitor the impact of fees and bursaries on target groups.

The College will pay particular attention to the impact of the new fees regime on applications from the poorest groups and will work with partner schools and colleges to ensure that student decision making pre application is monitored for early identification of debt aversion or other issues which lead to a student rejecting the option of application to higher education.

## **Data on Diversity of Student Population 2004/5**

### **Ethnicity**

| <b><i>Ethnic Group</i></b>            | <b><i>Percentage of Newman population</i></b> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| White                                 | 81%                                           |
| Asian                                 | 7%                                            |
| Black                                 | 4%                                            |
| Mixed ethnicity                       | 2%                                            |
| Other ethnicity                       | 1%                                            |
| Not known/given                       | 5%                                            |
| <b>Total ethnic minority students</b> | <b>14%</b>                                    |

### **Gender**

| <b><i>Gender Group</i></b> | <b><i>Percentage of Newman Population</i></b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Male                       | 19%                                           |
| Female                     | 81%                                           |

### **Age at start of academic year**

| <b><i>Age Group</i></b> | <b><i>Percentage of Newman Population</i></b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Less than 19            | 5%                                            |
| 19-21                   | 33%                                           |
| 22-25                   | 19%                                           |
| 26-35                   | 21%                                           |
| Greater than 35         | 22%                                           |

**Social Class** (Source: HESA Performance Indicators 2002/3)

**Table 1a Young FT First Degree**

|                                                  | <i>Newman</i> | <i>Benchmark</i> | <i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Percentage from State Schools                    | 100%          | 89.8%            | 92.9%                              |
| Percentage from NS Sec classes 4,5,6 and 7       | 48.8%         | 38.9%            | 45.9%                              |
| Percentage from Low Participation neighbourhoods | 28.2%         | 15.8%            |                                    |

**Table 1b Young FT Undergraduate**

|                                                  | <i>Newman</i> | <i>Benchmark</i> | <i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Percentage from State Schools                    | 100%          | 89.9%            | 93.2%                              |
| Percentage from NS Sec classes 4,5,6 and 7       | 48.8%         | 39.6%            | 46.5%                              |
| Percentage from Low Participation neighbourhoods | 28.2%         | 16.3%            |                                    |

**Table 2a Mature FT Undergraduate**

|                                                                                         | <i>Newman</i> | <i>Benchmark</i> | <i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Percentage not previously in Higher Education and from low participation neighbourhoods | 32%           | 23.9%            | 28.6%                              |

**Table 2b PT Undergraduate**

|                                                                                         | <i>Newman</i> | <i>Benchmark</i> | <i>Location Adjusted Benchmark</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Percentage not previously in Higher Education and from low participation neighbourhoods | 30.1%         | 15.6%            | 25.1%                              |

**Allocation of additional income**

The College plans initially to use up to 40% of its additional income in various forms of student support. Whilst this is quite a high proportion, the College is anxious to ensure that fees do not deter the poorest students from application to higher education and that access to the teaching and childcare professions is not affected. Once we have evidence from early cycles, the College may seek permission to adjust this level of support. A large proportion of additional income will be allocated to student bursaries. In addition income will be allocated to the improvement of student support mechanisms including financial advice, academic counselling and personal advice. Additional income envisaged is set out below.

## **Calculation of Additional Fee income and cost of bursary support**

### **Student numbers - Full Time**

|                                                | <u>2006/07</u> | <u>2007/08</u> | <u>2008/09</u> | <u>2009/10</u> |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| PGCE                                           | 200            | 200            | 200            | 200            |
| Other UG yr1                                   | 450            | 450            | 450            | 500            |
| Other UG yr2                                   |                | 425            | 425            | 425            |
| Other UG yr3/4                                 |                |                | 425            | 425            |
| Number of students eligible to pay top-up fees | 650            | 1075           | 1500           | 1550           |

### **Level of fee**

|                                    |   | <u>2006/07</u> | <u>2007/08</u> | <u>2008/09</u> | <u>2009/10</u> |
|------------------------------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                                    | £ | 3,000          | 3,075          | 3,150          | 3,250          |
| Current basic tuition fee          | £ | 1,200          | 1,250          | 1,300          | 1,350          |
| Increase in fee income per student | £ | 1,800          | 1,825          | 1,850          | 1,900          |

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|                                                                                       |   |           |           |           |           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Increased income to college<br>(number of eligible students * increase in fee income) | £ | 1,170,000 | 1,961,875 | 2,775,000 | 2,945,000 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

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|                         |  |         |         |           |           |
|-------------------------|--|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Total Cost of Bursaries |  | 416,000 | 715,000 | 1,014,000 | 1,073,000 |
|-------------------------|--|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|

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|                             |  |        |        |        |        |
|-----------------------------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Total Cost of Outreach Work |  | 50,000 | 70,000 | 80,000 | 90,000 |
|-----------------------------|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|

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|                                          |  |         |           |           |           |
|------------------------------------------|--|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Income less cost of Bursaries & Outreach |  | 704,000 | 1,176,875 | 1,681,000 | 1,782,000 |
|------------------------------------------|--|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

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|                                                                         |   |     |     |     |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Percentage of additional fees income spent on<br>bursaries and outreach | % | 40% | 40% | 39% | 39% |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|

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