

University of Derby : Access Agreement : December 2004

1. Strategy for Widening Participation

1.1. Widening Participation has been a leading mission for the University of Derby for 15 years, reflected in an ongoing Strategy for Widening Participation which underpins the Corporate Plan, and is reviewed and revised annually. This formal Access Agreement for OFFA, which forms an Annex to that wider Strategy, refers to actions and other information which will be introduced next year with the publication of the University's statement on levels of fees and bursaries, but its impact on institutional practice will not be fully felt until 2006 onwards, when the strategy becomes supported financially through additional fee income. The Access Agreement also covers UoD's two partner colleges, Derby College and South East Derbyshire College, with whom it operates a Funding Consortium covering all their HE funding. The same terms and conditions are sought for them as for the University itself.

1.2. The University of Derby offers higher education to the broadest spectrum of its local and sub-regional populations, as well as to the wider national and international community. This is reflected in the University's student profile, in its 2004 Mission Statement: "The University of Derby aims to be the leading provider of high quality, accessible and flexible further and higher education for regional, national and international communities," and in the significant premium it has earned from HEFCE for Widening Participation. In 2003/04, 54% of its full-time intake were eligible for full fee remission, and 16% for part fee remission, leaving 30% paying full fees. UoD's amalgamation in 1998 with High Peak College Buxton created one of a small number of Universities which can genuinely claim to offer a seamless post- compulsory education from level 1 to level 8 in the National Qualifications Framework.

1.3. The University believes that WP is not merely an initiative aimed at targeting specific and changing groups of individuals, but rather an ongoing approach to the development and delivery of educational provision which can benefit all students from whatever background. Whereas there is much operational focus on supporting non-traditional learners, learners with disability, and other specified target groups, many of the initiatives we will take will benefit all students. In this way the strategy is not only about widening participation, but is also about increasing participation.

1.4. The Widening Participation Strategy is built on the notion of the student lifecycle, and so seeks to:

- **Raise aspiration and attainment through outreach work**
- **Ensure maximum opportunities for access and progression**
- **Offer fair and facilitative access systems**
- **Retain students well and equip them for employability**

These areas form the basis for compiling action plans at local level within the institution.

2. Outreach

2.1. The University of Derby has well established mechanisms for outreach work through its leadership of Derbyshire Aimhigher, and its partnership with schools and colleges for young people, and community initiatives and employers for adults.

2.2. However, from additional fee income, it will extend its existing Compact arrangements with schools and colleges in disadvantaged communities, as identified by our ASP database as having lower than average participation rates. We will enhance opportunities for their students to visit the campus and participate in taster sessions. UoD will increase the use of students as role models and mentors for school pupils.

2.3. For adults, UoD will seek additional funding for regeneration projects in areas characterised by low participation. It will extend the work of its Business Development Managers to maximise the development of new vocational progression routes, and flexible provision to meet specified demand of learners without higher education qualifications in the workplace.

2.4. Existing and new activities are articulated in full in our Widening Participation Strategy. However, the new activities, with associated targets and milestones, to be invested in from additional fee income, are charted in 10 below.

3. Progression opportunities

3.1. Through the Aimhigher project and other local learning partnerships, the University is undertaking curriculum mapping to identify workforce development priorities which will lead to an enhanced range of progression pathways available across the level 3/level 4 divide. Within UoD seamless progression is made possible at this interface from our FE to our HE programmes.

3.2 The work of the University's Regional Enterprise Development centre (RED), Learning Through Work programme and Foundation Degree Development Group is generating further flexible work-based routes to meet these needs.

3.3. The Combined Studies Programme will continue to be promoted as a cross-institutional programme offering a flexible curriculum and less restrictive progression routes for those with less traditional entry qualifications.

3.4. The University will continue to develop its capacity to offer many programmes and modules in e-learning forms to meet the requirements of individuals, employees and employer partners for flexible modes of study.

3.5. Specific targets and milestones for this work are contained within the Widening Participation Strategy. However, they will be underpinned by new resource from fee income to support a Partnership Office, and additional Community Outreach posts offering guidance on access and progression opportunities, as reflected below.

4. Fair and facilitative Access systems

4.1. The policy of the University is to admit those who, by virtue of their interests, abilities, knowledge, experience and motivation, will be best assisted to realise their full academic, creative or professional potential by benefiting from the University's educational provision.

4.2. The principle which underpins the admissions process is that of providing opportunities for all students to gain the highest level of award of which they are capable. Therefore admission of each student is based on a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to achieve to the standard required the aims and outcomes of the programme for the award for which they wish to register.

4.3. That the applicant can fulfil this expectation the University believes can be demonstrated through a wide variety of forms of preparation, including relevant experiential learning, vocational or professional awards, Access and Foundation level achievement as well as through an increasing variety of conventional certificated qualifications.

4.4. The admissions process aims to be consistent with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy, and its commitment to encouraging enrolment of students from a wide variety of backgrounds, including those from groups currently under-represented in higher education. It is designed to be fair and equitable and apply equally to all individuals regardless of ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, socio-economic background, sexual orientation or disability.

4.5. The University will maintain its commitment to providing clear information to the widest range of potential applicants; to this end all programmes will continue to:

- state their entry criteria in terms of the knowledge, skills competence and qualities required as well as in terms of qualifications;
- demonstrate how credit transfer and the accreditation of prior formal and experiential learning will operate;
- make explicit details of any selection processes and procedures and the criteria and means by which applicants will be judged;
- clarify which applicants will be interviewed, how interviews will be conducted and by whom, and the criteria used to make judgements;
- specify in broad terms how applicants may demonstrate achievement and motivation in different ways;
- ensure appropriate support and training for staff involved in the admissions process.

4.6. As the recommendations of the Tomlinson report are progressed, the University will work with other providers (particularly schools and colleges) to ensure that pre-entry curricula and awards reflect the needs of potential HE students and to develop its understanding and recognition of the increasing variety of qualifications and awards which will be presented as appropriate for entry to higher education.

5. Retention and Employability

5.1. The University believes that enabling students to complete an appropriate programme of higher education is equally important as attracting them to it in the first place. For the past year it has had an extensive Retention Strategy, funded from the Widening Participation premium received from HEFCE, which relates closely to our strategies for Widening Participation, for Learning, Teaching and Assessment, and for Employability. All full-time undergraduate students are supported in skills development and encouraged to acquire work experience during their programme of study.

5.2. The specific targets and milestones associated with the Retention Strategy are integrated with our Widening Participation Strategy.

6. Fee Arrangements from September 2006

The University of Derby intends to charge a tuition fee of £3000 p.a. from September 2006 for all its full-time undergraduate provision. This includes sub-degree provision, for which the University will apply full bursary arrangements for individuals as below, and may in addition negotiate block bursaries with partner colleges and employers. These will be publicised in advance to students through partners, as well as by UoD. Sandwich placement years for both degree and sub-degree provision will be charged at 50% of the standard rate set by HEFCE (i.e with no top-up fee) but no bursary will be payable during that year. Our policy in relation to part-time undergraduate and all post graduate provision is yet to be determined, but will be publicised in a timely manner for admissions through the arrangements in section 8.

7. Bursaries arrangements from September 2006.

The University of Derby intends to operate a range of bursary arrangements, of which only those applying directly to students from lower socio-economic groups are articulated here. We are likely to adopt Options 1-3 of the UUK/SCOP national scheme for the administration of bursaries, which will enable us to identify easily and students to identify for themselves eligibility for bursary support.

UoD will recognise four bands of disadvantage, based upon the calculations of residual income made by the Student Loan Company, and estimated to cover c70% of our present student profile.

Band A : students receiving the full national grant of £2700 will receive a UoD bursary of £800.

Band B : students receiving a part national grant of between £2000 and £2699 will receive a UoD bursary of £600.

Band C : students receiving a part national grant of between £1000 and £1999 will receive a UoD bursary of £400.

Band D : students receiving a part national grant of between £1 and £999 will receive a UoD bursary of £200.

These bursaries will be paid as cashback for maintenance purposes to students, in four instalments in December, February, April and June, to assist students in their financial management. Any rise in fees and bursaries will be limited to the standard HEFCE inflationary factor.

The University has as yet to determine what further categories of underrepresented students it may wish to support, and at what level. However, it is likely that those further categories will bring additional benefit to learners from lower socio-economic groups, so that the proportion of additional fee income benefiting them is likely to rise above the provisional c28%. The University's website will contain an on-line calculator to enable students to identify the level of support for which they will be eligible.

8. Provision of information on these arrangements for students.

8.1 For **continuing students** between now and 2006, it will be important to communicate that new arrangements will not affect them for the duration of their programme of study. This will be undertaken via the University student portal (UDO), and in conjunction with the University of Derby Student Union. Details of ongoing financial support will be issued with results information, through on-line and hard copy, and information packs for re-enrollers.

8.2 For **students new from 2006**, information will be provided as follows:

WHO	WHERE	WHEN
Enquirers/applicants	Recruitment and advertising material, hard copy and on-line.	From March 2005 after OFFA confirmation.
	Prospectus	From February 2005 for 2006 entry, subject to OFFA confirmation.
	Information packs outlining fee payment and bursary arrangements, with exemplars of living costs, details of UoD packages and aggregate cost of tuition.	June 2005
	Applicant portal of UoD Student Record System for on-line enquiry and response.	Sept 2005
	Open/visit days, with information and guidance available.	Rolling schedule from March 2005, after OFFA confirmation.
	Telephone and on-line enquiry service.	Web updated Feb 2005.
	Individual guidance appointments on campus.	From Sept 2005.
	Partner college and employer marketing information, for sub-degree provision.	From Sept 2005
	Hot links to other web sites, e.g. DFES, UCAS, Aimhigher.	From Sept 2005.
Registering students	Pre-registration guides will include aggregate tuition costs on a course by course basis.	From Spring 2006.
	Referral interviews to support staff.	From Sept 2005.

Continuing students	Student handbooks	Summer 2006.
	Re-enrolment packs with results information	Summer 2006.
	Referral interviews for guidance with support staff	Throughout 2006-07.
	UDSU magazine (DUSTED)	Throughout 2006-07.
	University portal (UDO)	

9. Institutional monitoring arrangements.

9.1. The University of Derby has a Widening Participation Strategy Group, chaired by the DVC Academic, which meets three times a year to review and revise strategy. The Access Agreement will form a natural part of its remit and it will receive monitoring reports at each of its meetings.

9.2. The DVC Academic will have executive authority for the Access Agreement and will report any significant issues to either Executive which meets weekly, or to the wider Corporate Management Team which meets monthly.

9.3 An annual progress report will be made to Academic Board, along with proposed revisions to strategy, and subsequently to the Governing Council.

10. Milestones and targets for outreach work funded from additional fee income.

In all possible cases work will be focussed upon wards with HE participation rates which are lower than the average for East Midlands. Work with colleges and with disabled learners will need to be more broadly focussed, but will still concentrate upon learners who are underrepresented in HE.

Additional activity	Period to 2006	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Partnership Office	Partnership Office created. Strategic agreements with Derby College, SEDC, Chesterfield and Burton Colleges in place by 2005/06		100% increase in overall progression rates by 2007/08 (04 number 61)	10% increase in progression from partner colleges.	10% increase in progression from partner colleges.	10% increase in progression from partner colleges
Compact development	Review completed. 5 Peak Schools signed up	40 new Compact enrolments	55 new Compact enrolments	70 new Compact enrolments.	80 New Compact enrolments	100 new Compact enrolments
Guaranteed Access scheme	Pilot for scheme conducted in Nursing subject area 2005/06	University-wide scheme launched for 2006/07 100adults enrolled, across all four schools.	130 adults enrolled.	175 adults enrolled.	220 adults enrolled.	250 adults enrolled.
Disabled access and progression development		9% increase in f/t participation, and 20% increase in p/t participation	Further4% increase in f/t and 16% p/t participation.	Further 5% increase in participation rates.	Further 5% increase in participation rates.	Further 5% increase in participation rates.
Community outreach	Staff recruited 2006 Targets to be set in relation to continuing and new outreach and progression work.	Foundation laying community outreach work.	20 new students recruited through targetted access initiatives.	50 new students recruited.	60 new students recruited.	70 new students recruited.

11. Costs associated with additional work funded from additional fee income.

The continuing plan for Widening Participation work, funded by the WP Premium funding from HEFCE, is articulated in full within our Widening Participation Strategy. However, below are forecast our costs in relation to additional work planned from additional fee income, covering both outreach and bursaries.

New work post 2006	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
Estimated additional fee income.			4,635,083	8,994,886	13, 110,086	13,110,086	13,110,086
Bursaries for lower socio-economic groups¹			1,287,649	2,536,065	3,753,498	3,753,498	3,753,498
Additional Outreach²:			250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
<i>Partnership Office</i>			55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000
<i>Compact development</i>			40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
<i>Guaranteed Access scheme</i>			40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
<i>Disabled students access and progression</i>			40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
<i>Community outreach</i>			75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
Total additional costs.			1,537,649	2,786,065	4,003,498	4,003,498	4,003,498
Existing WP costs³	3,750,000	3,750,000	3,750,000	3,750,000	3,750,000	3,750,000	3,750,000
Total WP activity costs from 2006			5,287, 649	6,536,065	7,753,498	7,753,498	7,753,498

¹ Bursary payments represent c27.8% of additional income in year 1, c28.2% in year 2, and c28.6% thereafter

² Additional outreach represents c5.4% of additional income in year 1, c2.8% in year 2, and c1.9% thereafter. These costs as well as fees and bursaries will rise with inflation, but are all represented here without inflation.

³ There is some uncertainty about what will happen to WP Funding Premiums post 2006, so our figures assume they are maintained at the same rate.

12. Projected outcomes

12.1. Targets for increasing participation and retention of students from underrepresented communities are given below against the published HEFCE Performance Indicators. This is slightly problematic because of eighteen months delay in publication of official figures for any academic year. However, we regard them as the most reliable indicators at present, affording benchmarking against our own performance and that of the sector at large. As internal data production becomes more comprehensive, we may seek to substitute our indicators for those of HEFCE.

12.2. Our proposed targets for participation reflect our current success, and are deliberately more modest than those for retention, since all Universities will to some degree be competing more for those students from disadvantaged groups in the first instance. Although participation may increase across the sector as a whole, growth is unlikely to be distributed evenly across institutions. Since UoD has a strong track record for Widening Participation, and those institutions who have less of a record are being challenged most to improve, it may be that in the early stages UoD makes little net gain. This may well be exacerbated by concern amongst the targets groups about potential debt until new arrangements are fully understood. As a consequence, our general strategy must be to maintain a strong profile for Widening Participation and to improve retention rates to meet or exceed benchmark.

12.3.

	Last pub. %	Adjusted benchmark	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
PARTICIPATION								
Young f/t UG								
-state school	97.3	94.5	97.3	97.3	97.3	97.3	97.3	97.3
-social class IIIM, IV, V	39.7	37.6	39	39	39	39	40	40
-low participation neighbourhoods.	12.1	13.4	15	16	16	17	17	18
Mature f/t UG- no previous HE, low participation neighbourhood.	16	16.4	16	16.5	16	16.5	17	17.5
P/t UG, no previous HE & low participation neighbourhoods								
- young	12.9	15.7	13	14	14	15	16	17
- mature	11.2	10.1	11.2	11.5	11	11.5	12	12
NON-COMPLETION.								
- young F/t UG	10.4	10.4	10.4	10.2	10	9.8	9.6	9.4
- mature F/T UG	16	15.7	16	15.8	15.6	15.4	15.2	15
- young low participation. Neighbourhood.	12.2	13.1	12.2	12	11.6	11.2	10.8	10.4
- mature, no previous HE	16.6	16.2	16.6	16.2	15.8	15.4	15	14.8
- mature with previous HE	12	13.8	12	12	12	12	12	12
DSA PARTICIPATION								
F/T UG	2.9	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5
P/T UG	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6

