

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY

ACCESS AGREEMENT

1. Summary

De Montfort University is committed to excellence in professional, creative and vocational subjects and has an outstanding track record in providing access to Higher Education for underrepresented groups.

- Our percentage of entrants from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7 (43%) is significantly above the location-adjusted benchmark (35.7%)
- Our percentage of students from ethnic minorities is also significantly above benchmark, with white students forming 63% of DMU's full-time undergraduate home student population compared to the national average of 79%.
- Our percentage of young full-time undergraduate entrants from low participation neighbourhoods is 15.6% as against the location-adjusted benchmark of 14.6%.
- Our percentage of entrants from state schools or colleges, at 96.5% is significantly above the location-adjusted benchmark of 93.2%.

Our current level of outreach to support our performance is indicated in section 5 below, which also gives our plans to enhance this activity. The aim of these measures and of the significant funding for students in bursaries and scholarships which we are proposing is to consolidate and maintain our support for underrepresented groups at or above benchmark over the next five years.

This is an ambitious overall target given our current level of achievement and the climate of uncertainty which is inevitable given the introduction of the new fee regime.

The total cost of our proposed support measures in terms of bursaries/scholarships and outreach activities, from the estimated additional fee income of £17.8m, is £4.9m, which is 27.5% of the total. In addition, significant funding will go towards infrastructure to support progression, students with disabilities, learning support and student hardship.

2. Fee Limits

We propose to charge £3000 per annum for all of our full time undergraduate programmes, whether delivered at DMU or by partner colleges. This fee will rise at the rate of inflation annually for all students.

3. Bursaries and Scholarships

We estimate that about 7,000 students in financial need will be supported per year, by qualifying for either a bursary or a scholarship, and the annual outlay to students will be £4.6m in current terms, plus the cost of administering these schemes, currently not calculated. Of this figure at least £3.3m can be directly attributed to students from underrepresented groups. Our schemes are summarised below.

3.1 Bursaries

At present 44% of our home/EU undergraduate students receive full means-tested support and a further 17.5% receive partial support. We propose to introduce a bursary scheme which will:

- award £300 pa to any individual in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant;
- award £500 pa to any individual in receipt of a partial Grant;
- make a further award of £1000 to students in these categories who also qualify for an academic scholarship (see 3.2 below), to bring the value of their award in total to £1300 or £1500 pa respectively. So those who have achieved high entrance qualifications in spite of their circumstances will receive an enhanced award in recognition of their achievement, an award aimed at enabling them to continue achieving at a high level.
- make a further award of £1000 to students in these categories who also qualify for a scholarship relating to success on an access to HE programme (see 3.3 below).

Bursaries will be paid on an instalment basis to students progressing satisfactorily through the system. The total annual value of this support by 2008/09, the first year in which variable fees will apply to all three undergraduate years, is estimated at £4.6m. We anticipate that of this £1.2m will consist of the academic scholarship element described in 3.2 below.

3.2 Academic Scholarships

We propose to establish a scholarship scheme which will provide academic scholarships and sports scholarships of £1000 each. The total value of this scheme is estimated at £2.6m (of which £1.5m will go to students also in receipt of the £300 or £500 bursary).

3.3 Scholarships for students coming with access to HE programme qualifications.

We propose to establish a scholarship scheme which will provide 30 scholarships per year for selected students admitted on the strength of access to HE qualifications. This is to encourage and reward endeavour and success among students entering with a widening participation background. This will cost an estimated £70k pa by 2008.

3.4 Access Scholarships

34% of our students are local, while in total a maximum 51% of these local students are eligible for full means-tested support. A scheme will also be developed within our overall scholarships scheme as described in 3.2 above, to offer access scholarships to those in particular local schools and colleges on the basis of a compact-style approach. These scholarships will target first-generation university entrants, who include those likely to have serious reservations about studying away from home. We are working with 35 schools and colleges and offering 385 scheme places per academic year from 2006 onwards.

3.5 Administration of Bursaries and Scholarships

The University will opt into the model bursary scheme proposed by UUK/SCOP, and the bursaries and scholarships will be administered by the Academic Registry supported by the Finance Office.

3.6 Partner Colleges

All DMU students, whether studying at DMU or at a partner institution, will be eligible for the above schemes. Partner institutions running DMU programmes will be able to offer further bursaries and scholarships from their own funds, in addition to the schemes detailed above. DMU will notify OFFA of such additional schemes of this sort as they arise.

4. Hardship Funds

The University assumes that HEFCE support under the Access to Learning Fund will continue.

5. Outreach Activity

Our outreach activities can be divided into direct activity and aspiration-raising activity.

5.1 Direct Activity

Our target for applications for 2006/07 is 25000 and we are actively working towards this. It is an ambitious target.

DMU currently engages in over 500 separate events per year, comprising both staff visits to schools and colleges (including parent evening events) and visits of students from schools and colleges to the University. By these means we make contact with over 18000 year 12 and year 13 students per year.

The emphasis of the visits to schools and colleges is to provide advice for the application process, on student finance, on life at the University and is aimed at parents as well as students. The focus of inviting visitors to the University is on similar topics while also giving a direct taster of DMU life and specific subject areas of interest. Our target market is largely first-generation University applicants.

The majority of the schools and colleges with which we work are in inner city or inner town locations. About 25% of our students are from FE colleges. All of our work is with the public sector.

We plan to expand the opportunities to bring students and parents to our campuses, as part of this agreement. Currently we host 30 such visits a year. This will increase by 50% by offering 45 opportunities to visit the University per year at an additional cost of approximately £10k.

We also plan to extend the number of summer schools for mature applicants from the current one per year to six per year so that they cover all Faculties. The cost of this expansion in activity is estimated at £10k pa.

5.2 Aspiration raising activity

We are already working within Aimhigher on a number of activities which are supported by approximately 50 undergraduates who work with school students to

ensure that they find out about life as a student. The AimHigher project locally is due to be working with the National Mentoring Project based at Cardiff University to extend this work of mentors in all three local universities, and is now part of the national project, Aimhigher Mentornet, based at Middlesex University.

As a result of the injection of extra funding as a benefit of additional fee income we intend to expand these activities by introducing:

- Year 11 and year 12 summer schools
- University experience days for years 6, 9 and 10
- Masterclasses for years 11 and 12
- Tasters for years 8 and 12
- Student shadowing for year 11

The cost of this expansion in activity is estimated at £190k pa.

6. Disabled Applicants

2.3% of our current student population is registered for the Disabled Student Allowance. We aim to raise this by the application of our policy for support, which is geared towards taking positive steps to seek and identify need at the application stage and agreeing at that stage means of satisfying that need. This involves our Disability Support Unit in considerable work with applicants. Current provision includes:

- Alternative format for printed materials available, e.g. Braille, large print.
- Enquiry Centre fitted out with facilities for enquirers with disabilities, e.g. wheelchair access, hearing loop, text phone, confidential interview room.
- Provision of special leaflet on dyslexia.
- Web site designed for use by disabled applicants.

7. Provision of Information to Students

The University has developed a communication and information strategy in relation to variable tuition fees. The main features of this strategy include the following.

- Implementation of a campaign on bursaries and scholarships to be launched in March 2005 to coincide with the publication of the 2006 Prospectus. The main focus of this campaign will be to provide clear and accessible advice to prospective students, their families and teachers.
- Production of a University student funding guide.
- Our next TV campaign to run in October/November 2005 on ITV and Channel 4 will direct students and families to sources for this advice and support.
- Our activities as described in section 5.1 above will include targeted presentations and provision of information packs containing advice.
- Case studies and a ready reckoner will feature on our web site.

A key aim will be to eliminate confusion and anxiety among our target market of low participation, first generation students.

Additional costs of supporting this strategy are estimated at £50k pa, excluding the TV campaign. This figure is included in the outreach activity expenditure detailed in the accompanying table on financial information.

The University will ensure that all students are clearly informed of the aggregate cost of tuition before they start their programmes and of the support available to them. Detailed information will also be available in our 2006 prospectus and website. We will shortly be testing various styles of presentation with existing students in order to judge the best approach.

8. Support for Students

In the context of this access agreement, DMU already spends over £0.75m pa in student support relevant to students from underrepresented groups. This includes such areas as our disability support unit, the student financial advice centre, the learning support centre and library services support.

Income from variable tuition fees will enable the University to expand such facilities.

9. Milestones

1. Year on year maintenance at or above benchmark performance levels in relation to proportions of student population with regard to social class, ethnic make-up, low-participation neighbourhood background.
2. Take-up of bursaries and retention rates of students with bursaries, monitored annually in relation to estimates.
3. Improvement in progression of 4% by 2010.
4. Expansion of visits of school and college students to 45 per year.
5. Expansion of mature applicant summer schools to 6 per year.
6. Achievement of 2006 application targets as given in section 5.1. Consequent annual setting and reviewing of targets and supporting activities.
7. Implementation of aspiration-raising outreach activity as given in section 5.2 above.
8. Annual review by Academic Board of work of its Admissions Committee in implementing the recommendations of the Schwartz report.

10. Monitoring Arrangements

Progress and success of these arrangements will be subject to operational quarterly monitoring activity linked to a review cycle appropriate to the nature of individual milestones, with a formal annual monitoring report for consideration by the Board of Governors and the Academic Board.

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Financial Information

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total estimated additional fee income	6.5m	12.9m	17.8m	17.8m	17.8m
Estimated amount of additional income to be spent on bursaries/scholarships	1.9m	3.3m	4.6m	4.6m	4.6m
Estimated amount of additional income to be spent on outreach	0.3m	0.3m	0.3m	0.3m	0.3m