

## **Access Agreement**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Oxford Brookes seeks to develop students' personal and intellectual growth and provide access for those who would not otherwise contemplate higher education. The University has a long tradition of embracing students from diverse backgrounds and welcomes the opportunity of demonstrating its commitment to wider access.
- 1.2 Oxford Brookes was again rated best new university for the eighth consecutive year in 2003 by The Times Good University Guide and one of the top universities for employability.
- 1.3 This access agreement provides both information on bursaries and financial aid packages and also describes the variety of initiatives in place and future plans designed to widen access further during the next five years.

### **2. Fee Limits**

- 2.1 Oxford Brookes charges the maximum fee of £3000 per year for full-time undergraduate courses undertaken by UK students. The fee will be set at this level for all full-time undergraduate courses commencing September 2006.
- 2.2 Students deferring their places to September 2006 during the 2004/05 admissions cycle and who advise the University of this before 1st August 2005 will not be charged the new fee. Students falling into this category will continue to be liable for the standard tuition fee and will be assessed for fee support through their local authority and the Student Loan Company (SLC) according to the statutory procedures current during 2004/05.
- 2.3 Oxford Brookes will inform prospective students of the total cost of their course prior to enrolment through the prospectus and relevant section of our website <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/finance/income/> Students will be advised that the fee will rise with inflation in line with regulations published by the Government each year.

### **3. The Oxford Brookes Bursary Scheme**

- 3.1 Oxford Brookes fully supports the principle of providing maximum financial support to students with lower financial resources and invests generously in a new bursary scheme. We believe that the new bursary scheme will target students presently under-represented in higher education by being straightforward, easily administered, transparent and underpinned with fair and simple eligibility criteria.
- 3.2 The new bursary scheme has been built on the previous scheme launched in 2003 which assessed students' eligibility according to their 'home' status defined by the Local Education Authority, full-time undergraduate mode of study, age, income and attendance at state school or college located within Oxfordshire and Excellence Challenge and/or an Education Action Zone.

- 3.3 The new scheme is open to all full-time undergraduate students from all schools whether independent or state and from across the UK. The sole eligibility criterion is based on family income.
- 3.4 Oxford Brookes has allocated a significant proportion of its fee income to support the bursary scheme above the minimum level specified by the Government. It is also our intention to enhance the current funding allocated to students who might not meet the minimum income threshold for eligibility but who nevertheless can demonstrate financial hardship. In these circumstances small allocations can be made from the Financial Hardship Fund which is described below in section 4 in greater detail.
- 3.5 The level of bursary an Oxford Brookes student might be entitled to will be assessed according to family income using the assessment already undertaken by the SLC. The maximum bursary will be £1200 per year. Students who receive an HE grant above £1200 will receive a bursary of £1200. For example, a student in receipt of the maximum HE grant of £2700 will receive an additional £1200 per year Brookes bursary. A student who qualifies for an HE grant of, for example, £700 a year will receive a Brookes bursary of £700 per year and so on. The minimum bursary awarded by Brookes will be £200 per year based on these criteria.
- 3.6 Oxford Brookes will provide cash allocations not fee remission. We believe that students are best placed to determine how they wish to spend their bursary. Under the Brookes scheme students may therefore decide how to spend this money – through accommodation or living expenses or in another way, entirely at their discretion.
- 3.7 The Brookes Bursary is linked to the assessment undertaken by the SLC and will consequently rise automatically in line with SLC increases.
- 3.8 Part-time students will continue to be charged half the cost of the current tuition fee (£575 at present), rising only in line with inflation. Oxford Brookes will not therefore include part-time students within the bursary scheme.

#### 4. **Other Financial Support**

- 4.1 Oxford Brookes has, for a number of years, allocated financial aid payments to students who could demonstrate urgent financial need. The allocation of funding has been and will continue to be made through specialist advisors within the Financial Aid Office who administer the Access to Learning Fund and the Emergency Fund, the latter of which provides small payments to students with specific financial problems according to set criteria. The existing financial aid packages are summarised on <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/finance/>
- 4.2 It is our intention, however, to build upon the existing funding available through the Access to Learning Fund and the Emergency Fund by committing additional funds to be allocated to students who can demonstrate financial hardship but who may not have qualified for a full university bursary. Students who have received no bursary, a bursary at a defined minimum level or less, or students who may have received a higher bursary but can demonstrate financial hardship will qualify for financial aid up to a maximum ceiling.
- 4.3 In addition to the bursary scheme, Oxford Brookes has expanded the funding available through the Hardship Fund. This will be aimed at supporting students who have already started courses at the University. The University will invest up to £500,000 in 2006/7, £750,000 in 2007/8 and £1,000,000 thereafter representing a significant increase in overall funds available in support of students experiencing hardship.
- 4.4 Oxford Brookes will develop a range of scholarships during the next five years, many of which will be targeted at schools and colleges identified through our outreach activities.

## 5 Access to Information

5.1 Oxford Brookes understands that variable fee arrangements and financial support between higher education institutions may be highly confusing to potential students and their advisors. We also appreciate that in order for students to make informed choices concerning their future, clear information about the levels of support available at Brookes needs to be readily accessible.

### 5.2 Prospective students

The bursary scheme is summarised within the prospectus <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/undergraduate> which is updated each year. In addition to the prospectus, Oxford Brookes has established a specific website designed to provide prospective students with a clear statement of the costs of studying at Brookes including the aggregate cost of tuition, and living costs and the institutional support available through our bursary scheme and financial aid. All information is available in various formats and available on request.

The website provides access to related sites including the SLC and the Department for Education and Skills.

Should prospective students have queries or comments which cannot be addressed by the website and prospectus, they may contact individual departments as follows:

Bursary entitlement: Income Office

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/finance/income/>

Financial Aid: Financial Aid Office

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/finance/>

Cost of tuition: Income Office

<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/finance/income/>

Cost of Living: Students' Union Advice Centre

<http://www.thesu.com/main/advice/advicecentre>

Oxford Brookes has also developed a range of information in the form of printed leaflets. Visit day packs given to parents and applicants will include detailed information on fees and bursaries. In addition, an information leaflet will be sent to all applicants as soon as they have received an offer from the University. The teachers information pack (see section 6.3.4) includes a general section on finance within which the fees and bursaries leaflet will be included. All target schools and sixth forms will be sent copies of the information leaflet and the UK recruitment team will distribute information at presentations delivered to our target schools. Finally, the University publishes a magazine, 'Active', which is regularly sent to all target schools. A special regular feature on fees and bursaries will be included in future editions.

### 5.3 Existing students

Existing students may also require clarification of the new fees and support schemes and particularly those who are currently in receipt of a bursary under the previous scheme. The primary sources of advice for existing students are the website [www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk) the Financial Aid Office, the Income Office and also the Student Directory and Handbook which provides an overview of the scheme and related matters.

## 6 Outreach Activity

- 6.1 Oxford Brookes has allocated additional funding to support outreach activities to raise aspirations and attainment. This funding is additional to bursary and other financial support and is derived from fee income. This additional spending enhances existing outreach work which has been central to our recruitment policy for a number of years and extends initiatives already in place.

Increased spending has also enabled Oxford Brookes to fund new initiatives which it believes will attract a greater number of applicants from under-represented groups in higher education, particularly those from low social economic groups, ethnic minorities and poorly represented communities.

### 6.2 Target audiences

The approximate number of students potentially affected by outreach activity is 40,000. This figure is made up of the number of 16 – 18 years old pupils currently studying at target schools and further education institutions (FEIs), excluding level 5 target schools (see below).

In addition, Oxford Brookes works with approximately 4,000 pre-16 pupils on a variety of activities to raise aspirations to continue with their education.

There are 535 target schools and FEIs that Oxford Brookes primarily works with to raise aspirations and encourage applications. State schools make up 358 and the remaining 177 are FEIs. Target schools and FEIs were chosen based on criteria designed to identify potential to send students to Brookes – state schools, within two hours drive of the University, with sixth forms comprising more than 200 students and an average point score of 250-300.

The schools and FEIs are separated into four different levels, each assigned different amounts of support. An additional fifth level incorporates a further 403 institutions from Education Action Zones (EAZs) and Excellence Challenge areas not currently included in levels 1-4 defined below.

Level	Description	No. of schools & FEIs
1	AimHigher (Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire)	43
2	Oxfordshire schools and FEIs	19
3	Regional schools and FEIs within a two hour drive time	418
4	Non-independent schools and FEIs which don't fall into criteria but consistently send students to Brookes	55
<b>Core target</b>	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>535</b>
5	EAZs and Excellence Challenge areas	403
<b>All</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>938</b>

### 6.3 Enhancements to existing schemes

#### 6.3.1 AimHigher ([www.aimhigher.ac.uk](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk))

Oxford Brookes, as the host institution, remains committed to the AimHigher initiative in Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. This initiative aims to raise the aspirations of pupils to continue their education and addresses the Government's target to achieve 50% participation in higher education among 18-30 year olds in England. At present the 2006/07 funding has not been confirmed by HEFCE although

we have made the assumption that funding will remain at least at current levels. The following enhancements to the existing initiatives were operational from September 2004:

Events	Target audience	Distribution
Higher Education Awareness Days (HEADs)	Future students	On campus - target FEIs (level 1)
Passport Year 9, 10 and 12	Future students	On campus - target schools (level 1)
Aimhigher Summer School	Future students, local community	On campus - target schools & FEIs (level 1)
Master classes	Future students, local community	On campus - target schools & FEIs (level 1)
Other raising aspirations events with Brookes academic schools	Future students	On campus - target schools & FEIs (level 1)

### 6.3.2 Guaranteed Offer Scheme (GO)

(<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/undergraduate/facts/application>)

The GO scheme was set up in 2003 to encourage Oxfordshire students from target schools and FEIs (level 2) to apply to Oxford Brookes University. Under the scheme, applicants who meet the typical course offers listed in the undergraduate prospectus will automatically receive a guaranteed offer of a place at the University.

### 6.3.3 Targeting under-represented groups

Oxford Brookes continues to provide targeted events for both pre and post-16 pupils. The events are designed to raise aspirations of pupils to remain in education and give a 'taste' of subjects available to them. An increasing number of events are held year on year. The following schemes will be expanded in 2005:

Events	Target audience	Distribution
Taster sessions	Future students	On campus – Years 12 & 13 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-3)
Local summer schools	Future students, local community	On campus – Years 12 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-2)
Foyer summer school (in partnership with Foyer to provide support & confidence)	Local community	On campus – 18 – 24 year olds who have previously been homeless and have now received a place at a UK university.
Christmas lecture	Future students, local community	On campus – Years 7, 8 & 9 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-2)
Kids on the Web	Future students	On campus – Year 5 & 6 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-2)
The Art of Web Design	Future students	On campus – Year 7, 8 & 9 pupils from target school & FEIs (levels 1-2)
Science Week	Future students	On campus – Years 9, 10 & 11 pupils from target schools & FEIs (levels 1-2)
ACE Passport Year 9 (in partnership with Warwickshire LEA)	Future students	On campus – Year 9 pupils from target schools in Warwickshire

### 6.3.4 Teachers' Information Pack

([www.brookes.ac.uk/schoolsandcolleges/information\\_pack](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schoolsandcolleges/information_pack))

Information for tutors has been produced by Oxford Brookes in the past. However, the Teachers' Information Pack is much more extensive than previous packs. The pack is designed to help teachers advise their students and parents on higher education. The 14 non-Brookes-specific fact-sheets in the pack can be photocopied as hand-outs for other staff, students and parents. An offer was also made to send staff and student

ambassadors to local schools to give presentations on all aspects covered in the pack. These packs were sent to level 1-4 target schools and FEIs in October 2004 and will be updated in Spring 2005 and then annually unless there are significant changes in higher education.

#### Factsheets

- 1 Writing references for teachers
- 2 What can university do for me?
- 3 Routes to, and levels through, university
- 4 Choosing a course
- 5 Choosing a university
- 6 Applying to university
- 7 Writing personal statements
- 8 University interviews
- 9 Students' finance facts
- 10 Revision tips
- 11 You what? – jargon buster
- 12 Websites to explore
- 13 Information for disabled students
- 14 Frequently asked questions for parents

#### 6.3.5 Ethnic minority outreach work

Since November 2003 Oxford Brookes University and Oxford and Cherwell FE college have jointly funded two ethnic minority outreach workers. Their role is to work with the local community in Oxford City, especially those who have become disengaged from education.

BME (British Minority Ethnic) groups account for 3.3% of the total population in Oxfordshire and approximately 2,280 BME young people aged between 16 and 24 years (*Office for National Statistics*). The outreach workers also work with under-16 groups.

One outreach worker primarily works with the Asian community and in particular with people who originate from Bangladesh and Pakistan. The other works with youngsters with African heritage, including those from the West Indies, immigrants from Africa and black British.

The outreach workers have been tasked with providing support and developing activities to raise the aspirations of these ethnic minority groups. Activities undertaken include establishing contacts and building relationships with the local communities and conducting focus groups with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation ethnic minority students to monitor progress and progression pathways. On-going outreach work includes:

<b>Events</b>	<b>Target audience</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
Bridging Project (offers advice and support)	Future students, local community	Over 250 students in FEIs (16-19 year-olds including recent arrivals from ethnic minorities who are planning to stay in Britain)
Black History Month (events celebrating cultural diversity of Oxford)	Local community	Venues throughout Oxfordshire

#### 6.4. New Outreach Activity

##### 6.4.1 Aimhigher

Together with Oxford Brookes, Aimhigher is establishing several new initiatives in 2005 to raise aspirations of pupils to continue their education:

<b>Events</b>	<b>Target audience</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
Science Challenge (in partnership with the University of Reading)	Future students	Year 9 pupils in target schools & FEIs (level 1)
Lego League	Future students	Years 8 & 9 pupils in target schools & FEIs (level 1)
Pilot mentoring project (using Brookes undergraduates)	Future students	Year 10 & 11 pupils in Milton Keynes target schools & FEIs

##### 6.4.2 Associate College Partnership

Oxford Brookes University together with three FEIs – Abingdon and Witney, Brooklands and Solihull Colleges formed the Associate College Partnership in December 2004. The aim of the Partnership is to make higher education even more accessible to all students who have the capability to do well. Long-term relationships with these colleges will enable the sharing of best practice and provide students with greater options. The Partnership is underpinned by joint student number planning and aspiration raising.

Eleven courses have been set up in collaboration with staff at each of the colleges. All programmes from foundation degrees and courses to higher national certificates and diplomas are Brookes accredited and follow a natural pathway that can lead to undergraduate study at Oxford Brookes University (a further nine courses have been set up with other colleges not currently in the Partnership).

([http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schoolsandcolleges/partnership\\_courses](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schoolsandcolleges/partnership_courses))

##### 6.4.3 Targeting under-represented groups

'One great big foot in the door' campaign

(<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/bigfoot>)

Oxford Brookes is developing a youth campaign to target under-represented groups in higher education including non-independent schools and FEIs.

The campaign demonstrates how continuing on into higher education can enhance employment prospects. Oxford Brookes has an excellent employability record due to the flexible nature of its courses, close links with employers and former students and work placement opportunities.

The big foot campaign was launched in October 2004, with Teachers' Information Packs being sent to level 1-4 target schools and FEIs (see 6.3.3). This was followed by development of specific web pages and the of mailing posters, leaflets and coasters to sixth forms in level 1-5 target schools and FEIs

It is envisaged that this campaign will continue for the next two years with additional posters, leaflets and other merchandise.

#### 6.4.4 Ethnic minority outreach work

Oxford Brookes has planned the following new initiatives in support of its outreach work:

<b>Events</b>	<b>Target audience</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
Weekly homework groups (support and guidance from Brookes undergraduates)	Future students, local community	Year 10 pupils from local target schools & FEIs (level 1) - Bangladeshi female groups - Bangladeshi mixed groups - Black mixed groups
Surma Project (web design workshop)	Future students, local community	Bangladeshi male pupils from local target schools & FEIs (level 1)
Fight Against Drugs Environment (FADE)	Future students, local community	Various venues - young people in or out of education that may be involved in related activities
Edge (weekly education, training and employment needs analysis)	Future, local community	Various venues - with a focus on young females in or out of education

Future developments are likely to include the roll out of successful activities to wider groups within these communities.

#### 6.4.5 Increasing the employability of Oxford Brookes students

Oxford Brookes believes that initiatives established in order to further increase the employability of its graduates also benefits the access agenda. We have consistently been rated one of the top universities for graduate employment and have a well-founded reputation for achieving this objective. Such a reputation will encourage applications from those who would not otherwise have contemplated higher education who are predominately focused on improving employment prospects and who wish to embark on a vocationally and professionally-oriented career.

Several new activities will be taking place in 2005 to improve the employability and job seeking skills of our students and graduates. These include:

- employment of a new enterprise officer in the Careers Centre to develop relationships with employers for work placements, project work and graduate opportunities
- work placement officers within each of our eight academic schools
- further posts in our alumni office to maintain contacts with former students and develop work opportunities for current students and graduates
- a new credited module in personal career development available to all students
- a new short course designed to develop entrepreneurial talent
- all students are to produce a personal development plan with their personal tutors to encourage them to think about their personal achievements and plan for the future.

### 7 Improved learner support and experience

Oxford Brookes has established a fully resourced learner support facility, accessible to all students who require additional learning support. Activities supported by the facility include:

- tutorial surgeries
- study skills seminars and surgeries for modules with low pass rates
- electronic resource provision
- e-mentoring
- peer assisted learning scheme



The University is confident that the learner support facility will improve retention and fulfil a need among students less confident in acquiring learner skills. The learner support facility will feature strongly in the University's outreach work and we believe will encourage applicants who would not otherwise contemplate higher education.

## 8 Milestones

8.1 Oxford Brookes believes that the primary criterion for measuring the success of its access measures is the percentage increases in enrolled students from state schools. We have considered the value of establishing our own milestones in relation to increasing the numbers of state school applications and enrolments and agreed that statistical milestones are important in order to maintain momentum in the creation of new access initiatives and the assessment of the effectiveness of such measures.

8.2 We also consider that statistical milestones should be realistic and achievable. Oxford Brookes is located in a prosperous region where the cost of living is higher than the national average and while the University attracts students from all regions of the UK, its traditional markets have been drawn from London, the Home Counties and the West Country. Increasing participation remains a challenge therefore and the University is placing considerable resources and effort into meeting its own milestones.

8.3 Using our 2004 baseline data of around 67% we have therefore agreed to establish the objective of increasing state school participation to 75% by 2010 with annual increases as shown below:

Year	State school	Ethnic minorities	Low socio economic groups
2006	68%	9%	21%
2007	68%	10%	21%
2008	70%	10%	22%
2009	72%	11%	23%
2010	75%	11%	23%

8.4 Oxford Brookes places considerable value on ethnic minority and lower socio economic group participation and has set milestones accordingly.

## 9 Monitoring arrangements

9.1 We shall undertake a comprehensive annual monitoring exercise of the effectiveness of our access measures. Such a review will consider both quantitative and qualitative performance indicators and reports will be submitted to the executive and academic committees as appropriate. The monitoring data collected throughout the application cycle will form the basis of the annual monitoring report submitted to OFFA each year.

9.2 The allocation of bursaries will be monitored and the numbers of eligible students will be recorded together with the numbers of requests made, and allocations granted to students for additional financial aid.

9.3 A review of the annual plan of outreach activity will be produced and an evaluation of the key objectives within the plan undertaken.

9.4 Tracking of applications from students falling within the widening access definitions will be monitored and reported upon. Specifically, data will be collected on applications received from the target audiences defined in section 6.2. and also those from the Associate College Partnership.

9.5 Enrolment data will be collected by school type, low socio economic groups, low participation neighbourhoods and ethnic minorities and measured against the milestones set within section 8.3.

- 9.6 The annual report will be considered in detail by relevant central directorates together with the academic schools before receiving formal consideration at the Executive Board and the Academic Board. Action plans arising from the annual report will be assigned to named university officers who will be responsible for implementation.

March 2005