

## **Introduction**

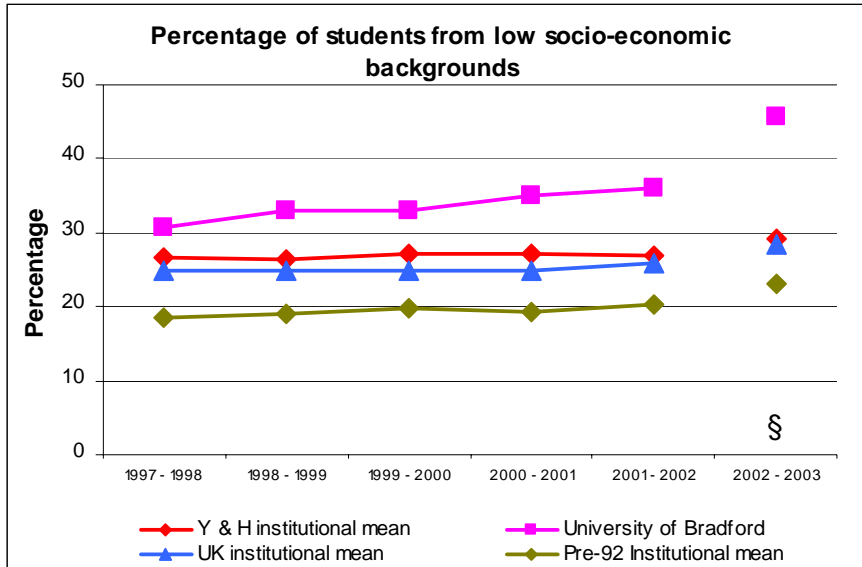
The University of Bradford is at the leading edge of widening participation to higher education with one of the most socially inclusive student populations in the United Kingdom, which is combined with good student retention rates and consistent major success in achieving graduate employment rates for our students. In essence a university committed to its community and student success.

The University's new Corporate Strategy for 2004-2009 commits it to continuing with this success and to ensuring further enhancement to the quality of the student experience. We are seeking to invest in the longer term over £130 million through the delivery of our estates strategy, which will improve learning, residential and facilities infrastructures including the provision of a state of the art web based campus

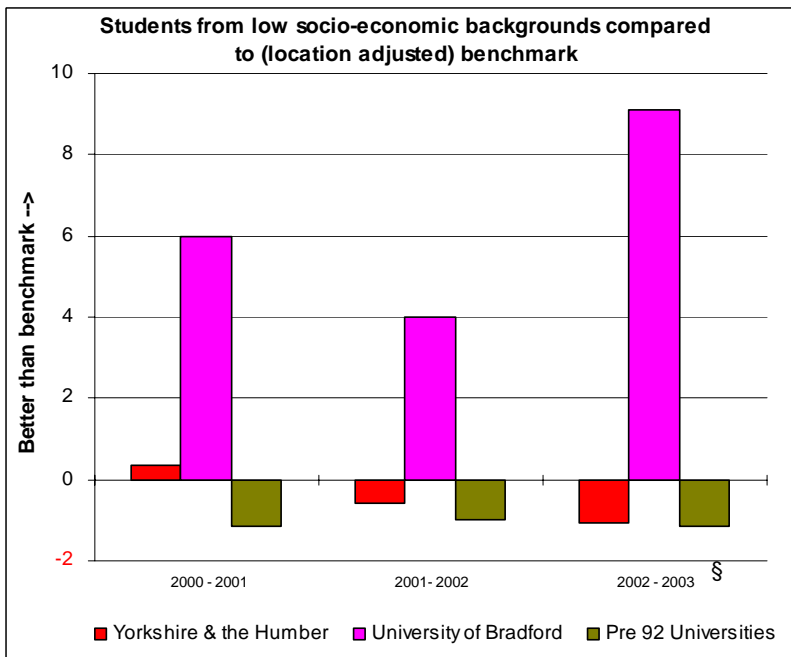
Over the lifetime of its most recent Widening Participation Strategy and the Corporate Plan for the period 2000 – 2005, the University has made spectacular progress. It has always performed well in terms of recruiting locally, from diverse communities and from low-income groups. Since the publication of the first set of Performance Indicators in 1999 the University has performed above the national benchmarks, particularly relating to students from lower socio economic groups, and this performance has increased over the past two years. The effect of this success has resulted in a fundamental change in the student population, and as a result the University is continuing the process of policy review to ensure the continuation of the best possible learning experience for all students irrespective of their cultural, social, health or financial background

Although a number of definitions have change in terms of the data collection, table one on the following page demonstrates how the University performance compares with other pre 92 universities, the sector average and other HEIs in Yorkshire and the Humber. This simply confirms the University's position in terms of securing greater social inclusion with nearly 50% of our home and EU first year students coming from low socio economic groups. Table two reflects this performance against benchmark which even taking into account the location adjusted figure portrays successful delivery of the strategy

**Table 1.**



**Table 2.**

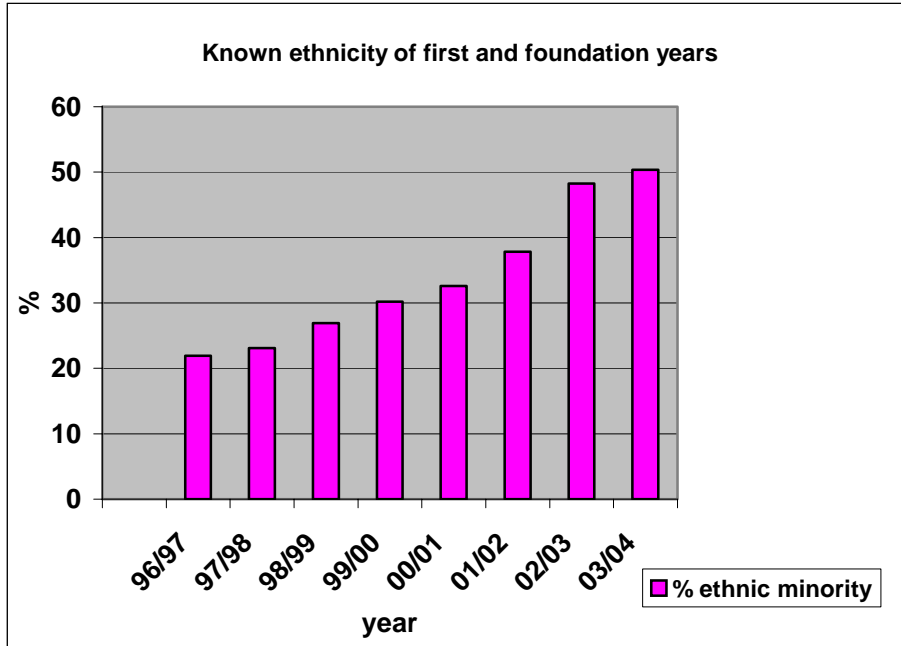


**§ Social Class**

For the 2001 census, a new classification, National Statistics - Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC), was developed to replace Social Class. It took into account new work patterns in the UK, and the changes in education levels required for, and the status of, large numbers of occupations. This new classification was used for the social class PI this year, and as a result this will now be called the SEC indicator. In previous years, the six categories of Social Class were combined by taking classes I, II and III as 'high' social class, and classes III, IV and V as 'low' social class. The new classification has seven analytic classes, and groups 1 to 3 are used as 'high' class and 4 to 7 as 'low'. This has increased the overall percentage from low social class by over 2.5%.

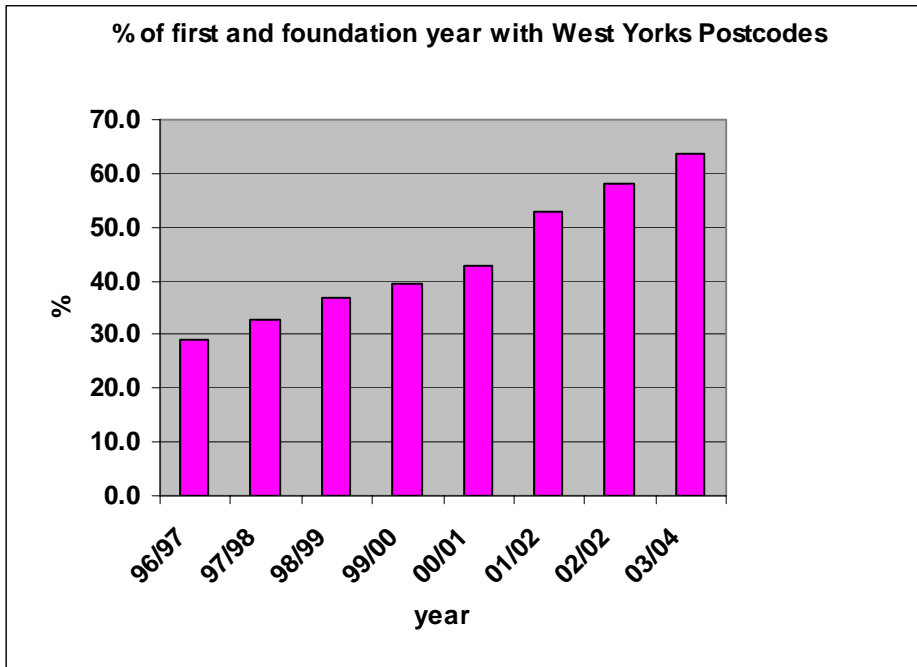
This participation level demonstrates the success of the University's approach to inclusivity. It has worked hard with local communities, schools and colleges to seek to provide a more balanced student population in keeping with the needs of the sub region. We have therefore seen significant change in the ethnic profile of the student body in terms of home students as table three demonstrates. There have also been significant increases in International students with students from over 100 countries to create a multi cultural learning environment.

**Table 3. University of Bradford ethnicity of home first and foundation year students**



In line with the rest of the sector, there has been an increasing trend for students to stay at their parental home whilst studying. In 2003/04 over 40% of full time first and foundation year students lived in their parental home, and 63.8% had West Yorkshire postcodes. Table four demonstrates those trends

**Table 4. University of Bradford Home first and foundation year students with West Yorkshire Postcodes**



The University continues to have a marginally higher than average number of students in receipt of Disabled Students allowance at 3% compared with the national average of 2.6% in 2002/03. The University has a Disability Office, which is part of our overall Student Services facilities. Disability Office staff deal initially with all requests for information, guidance and support for students identified as disabled. This involves assessing individual educational, technical and personal needs and identifying appropriate sources of support, including external funding.

The University's outreach strategy and links with schools and colleges is managed under the umbrella title of the Bradford University Academy (see page 7) which has several strands

- Raising aspirations through activities with schools and colleges to demonstrate the value that HE can bring
- Raising Attainment levels
- Facilitating progression through a compact scheme through which students submit assessed course work

The University has long held the view that successfully widening participation requires more than activities to simply change the nature of participation, as the key is to ensure that students succeed in their programmes of study and then move into graduate employment. The University's retention rate continues to perform above the level of its benchmarks. However, this data related to students who entered at the latest in 1999 and the University will continue to invest in high quality learning and teaching with high levels of student support. This will continue to develop through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

The University continues to achieve success for graduates in the working world. We are particularly proud of our graduate employment rates in Bradford with over 83% of 2001/02 graduates taking up graduate or graduate track employment.<sup>1</sup> This positioned the institution within the top ten in the country in the 2005 Times Good University Guide, and number one University in the North of England for this indicator.

### **Widening Participation and our Corporate Strategy.**

One of our main core values '**confronting inequality, celebrating diversity**' has and continues to set the context for much of our work. The publication of the new Corporate Strategy for the period 2004-2009 continues this by commitment to the following Corporate Objectives:

- **Widening participation, achievement and social inclusion**
- **Enhancing the Distinct Learner Experience**
- **Working and learning in a diverse community**
- **A University at the heart of its community**

Our commitment to achieving inclusion does not just limit itself to the admissions process, we are fully committed to ensuring that students are supported in a manner that is appropriate for their own circumstance, to ensure that retention rates are good, and students from all backgrounds have the same chance of success. To this end, the University is now in the process of reviewing and redefining its Academic Policy, which will support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy for the same period, up to 2009. The vision is for an expanding and vibrant University, with a curriculum that addresses the needs of existing and new stakeholders through the embedding of the new 'three cycle model'<sup>2</sup>. As previously stated, the University is already able to demonstrate a successful track record with regard to raising participation levels, but realises that there is still progress to be made to continue to demonstrate its commitment to inclusiveness, social inclusion and raising the performance of the local region and its economy. We will continue to pursue this by:

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<sup>1</sup> Number of graduates taking up employment or further study divided by the number with a known destination, including employment which normally recruits graduates and adjusted for the institutional subject mix

<sup>2</sup> Which will facilitate expansion of the curriculum

- Ensuring that the University's success in widening participation, completion rates and employability of students remains amongst the best in the UK HE sector.
- Providing student support and guidance services of the highest quality
- Establishing Lifelong Learning Networks

We are therefore keen to safeguard our current success at attracting, retaining and equipping students from the most under represented groups. The following sections of this document set out our approach and plans for the next five years.

## Level of fees

In accordance with the terms of the Higher Education Act 2004 the University of Bradford plans to use the facility for charging variable tuition fees at a level above the current regulated amount from the academic year 2006/7. The University's position on the level of fees is attached as **Annex 1** to this agreement. The University reserves the option as part of our fees policy to adopt a market sensitive approach, to the fee level set. This approach will be incorporated into our review and monitoring mechanisms of both our Corporate and Financial Strategies, outlined on page 11 of this document. Full information on any material changes will be communicated to Offa, as appropriate.

## Bursaries

The 2003/04-entry profile showed that the breakdown of full-time home students in relation to the receipt of fees support is currently:

Household income **£0-£20,970** receiving full support **(50%)**

Household income **£20,970 - £31,230**, receiving partial support **(11%)**

Household income above **£31,230** or no application for fees support **(39%)**

As can be seen from the above, this is considerably above the national average of 30%, for those who receive full fee support, a reflection of our existing successful position relating to widening participation. We expect that the profile for 2004/05 entrants will continue this trend with an increase in those eligible for full support through the Higher Education Grant. We are using this information as a proxy to aid our planning, in the absence of any other more appropriate data, for information only at this stage and not a direct statement on student financial means. Nevertheless, we are fully committed to the provision of **minimum standard bursaries** of £300 per academic year, from 2006/07 to all those who are eligible for the full Higher Education Grant.

Based on our current student participation the University expects to spend a greater proportion of additional fee income on bursaries than most other universities with over 50% of students likely to qualify for the maximum grant. The University bursary scheme will comprise two strands both qualifying for a minimum bursary of at least £300 for each year of their course.

### 1. Entitlement Strand

All students in receipt of the maximum Higher Education Grant on entry to the full time degree course charging the maximum fee of £3000 per annum

### 2. Targeted Scholarship Strand

All students that are part of the Bradford University Academy receiving any level of Higher Education Grant on entry to the University

The University is as stated earlier committed to promoting student success, and this applies to progression, retention and further study. In order to achieve this, we have reached agreements with those institutions where our students progress as part of their academic route, e.g. Clinical Sciences route to Leeds University, in order to ensure that their bursaries will be honoured for the lifetime of the course. Similar discussions and arrangements will apply to institutions and courses where we are the progression route – e.g. from HND to BA.

We will also seek to develop a package of reductions on our fees at postgraduate level, for those who have received bursary support at this University during their first degree. This will be developed by year three of this agreement.

We will continue to investigate the developing arrangements for the administration of student support, including that proposed by Universities UK as part of the model bursary scheme, but we realise that this is still in development, and will be keeping progress under review.

### **Other financial support**

We will also establish a **Learning Support Fund**, which will be created using an element of the additional fee income. The Learning Support Fund, together with our commitment to the minimum standard bursary is estimated to be approximately 30% of projected additional fee income (see page 9) this will recognise that sometimes students have financial difficulties in learning and will provide additional flexibility to support student need. In addition to the provision of individual custom support packages the Learning Support fund will be used to support the targeted scholarship strand of the bursary scheme, which will support our Bradford University Academy Students. We have not set a maximum limit on the amount of support that can be received in terms of the level of scholarship or bursary, as we would wish to assess individuals on the basis of need, and would not wish to be constrained. It will also provide needs based support to other under represented students, such as those with disabilities. This fund will also support actions to expand the number and range of externally funded scholarships, through the development of a pro-active strategy and will support the development of enhanced financial information provision to students to ensure that they are fully aware of the costs of studying at Bradford and support available to them. One way in which we intend to enhance this provision is by seeking to develop a Web based financial support Calculator

### **Outreach activities**

The University has a very successful and extensive outreach programme, and this scale of activity is embedded in our Corporate Strategy, as discussed earlier in this document. Our key corporate objectives are:

- **Widening participation, achievement and social inclusion**
- **Working and learning in a diverse community**
- **A University at the heart of its community**

We have clearly stated that this work will be further embedded into the work of the institution in our Corporate Strategy, and given our success to date, do not initially plan to fund additional outreach activity from additional fee income.

The University is proud of the success of its outreach programme, which has put the University of Bradford at the forefront nationally for recruiting students from low-income families and has outperformed the sector on average by 12%. Of the eight Universities in Yorkshire, Bradford is ranked first in recruiting first-degree entrants who were from families who do not traditionally access higher education.

The University has an extensive outreach programme and divides this work into three specific areas:

## **1. Bradford University Academy**

This cross-institutional initiative is a programme of activities aimed at raising the aspirations and achievement of young people and encouraging progression into higher education.

The Academy is a co-ordinated scheme, which works with young people from primary age upwards, specifically in disadvantaged areas of the sub-region, particularly BME communities, offering activities such as ACE days, fun days, master classes, Junior University, campus trails, revision classes, summer schools, and the Bradford University Compact Scheme. Compact Scheme members can achieve up to 30 points towards their Bradford UCAS tariff if they successfully complete assessed activity. This has been a major development over the last academic year. In the first full year of the Compact160 year 12 students enrolled on the scheme and 74 year 13 students. For 2004-05 this number is expected to double.

## **2. University in the Community**

University in the Community is a programme, which targets adults in the community, and offers a wide range of aspiration raising activity, including taster courses, Community Days, and accredited modules based off campus. The programme targets adults who have no previous experience in HE and specifically aims to work with 'hard-to-reach' groups such as those recovering from substance misuse, and those from white working class estates.

Other areas of this work focus on those who influence young people such as the parents and carers and for example there are currently 50 women of Asian origin from one geographical area of Bradford who are engaged in a pilot off campus accredited programme.

The University has been active since mid 2003 in delivering the Horton Grange Community Development Project. The main purpose of the Project is to identify, promote and support the development of the community organisations within the geographical area of the Horton Grange Local Development and Employment Pact (LDEP). The Project supports the development of community organisations and/or social enterprises. This support also involves the creation of new groups where a need is identified, and supports them in accessing campus resources where appropriate.

## **3. FE to HE**

Another specific area of outreach is targeting both mature students and young people to engage in FE provision, and in particular working to aid progression from vocationally related courses.

The University has made a major commitment in its Corporate Strategy to the further development of lifelong learning networks and partnerships. Over the next two years this development will be pursued with local colleges, and the Open College Network for North and West Yorkshire, as a means of developing progression routes, and more localised HE provision.

Contributing to these three strands are a number of externally funded initiatives, which include:

## **Aimhigher**

The University is an active participant in the West Yorkshire Aimhigher initiative, working closely with schools and colleges to promote greater progression to higher education. The main activities are linked to the Bradford University Academy, along with a major commitment to student mentoring and links with work based learning providers.

## **HEIF 2**

The University was one of the most successful universities in securing Higher Education Innovation fund support from HEFCE with a grant of £2.4million. A major strand of this initiative will support the establishment of the Centre for Community Collaboration with a group of Community Associates linking the University of Bradford with its community, in line with our corporate objectives.

The HEIF2 scheme includes a significant commitment to supporting the Regional Skills agenda through a transformation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, thus widening opportunities for those already in employment seeking to develop appropriate skills.

## **Provision of financial support information**

The University already provides a comprehensive financial information service to potential students. Our Student Financial and Information Services (SFIS) is the principal point of contact for students outside their academic department, and gives a wide range of advice and support, including financial guidance, and the administration of financial relief, bursaries and awards. SFIS is increasingly used as an example of best practice in its field, and was one of only four institutions nationally involved in the DfES working party for the review of student support. This has led to further regular and close liaison with DfES, and a proactive approach to the development of new approaches to the way in which we support our students. We are currently in the development stage of the one-stop shop for students to improve service yet again. A 'virtual' one-stop shop will open from Sept 05. This will be closely followed by the creation of a single physical location for the department, which is part of the £130 million Estates Strategy investment, discussed earlier in this paper. The SFIS also plays a crucial role in student recruitment and retention with talks to parents and prospective students regarding finances and welfare provision and support.

We recognise however, that the changing nature of financial support within HE and the public debate that has taken place regarding top up fees means that we have to enhance our current provision and provide different levels of information and to very different age groups and this will be funded from additional fee income. The development of the **Learning Support Fund** discussed earlier, will facilitate the change in direction, as it will enable more flexible and targeted responses to need, engagement at an earlier level with potential students and their families. We will also seek to expand the number and range of externally funded scholarships, through the development of a pro-active strategy, linked to our existing expertise. We will be producing a range of financial information, appropriate to the individual needs of differing target groups. Thus, we are able through the above existing facilities, and planned developments to commit to providing information on the aggregate cost of tuition, and levels of support to students prior to the stage at which they gain a place.

## The total amount to be spent on access measures

The full extent of expenditure, which the University of Bradford currently spends on access and outreach measures, is difficult to measure. As a minimum we have identified around **£1.2million** per year, but this does not take into account the full contribution of University of Bradford schools or of project funding. Given the scale of this contribution, and our current enrolment patterns, and as stated earlier, we do not plan to increase spend in this area. However, funds that are additional to the above to cover bursaries and the learning support fund are estimated at **£955K** in 2006/07, rising to over **£3million** in 2009/10.

This funding is related to recruitment targets and therefore will vary pro rata to these targets, but represents approximately 30% of projected additional fee income.

A breakdown of spending areas is detailed below:

Detail	Target Group	Comments
<b>Minimum Standard Bursary (Entitlement strand)</b>	All those eligible for full HE grant	
<b>Targeted Scholarships (Learning Support Fund)</b>	All students that are part of the Bradford University Academy receiving <b>any</b> level of HE grant on entry to the University	Will be funded from the Learning support fund.
<b>Learning Support Fund Financial Support information</b>	Bradford University Academy Disabled students Other under represented groups, supporting achievement.	Will support flexible responses to widening access.
<b>Administrative costs of the above activity</b>	All recipients	An initial estimate of the cost has been set at 5% of the additional fee income related to the bursaries and learning support fund.

## The University is fully committed to the following Milestones and objectives:

- Maintaining the current broad ethnic balance of our population of home undergraduates, whilst at the same time focussing on smaller minority groups who may not be represented as fully as we would hope.
- Enhancing and increasing participation of older learners
- Maintaining our position above benchmark relating to NS-SEC participation of all full time young undergraduate entrants.
- Continuing our remit as an institution at the forefront of the national and regional policy agenda on widening participation

## Baseline Data and Milestones

Baseline Data Definition	Milestones
Ethnic minority participation of home and EU undergraduates	Maintain overall % participation of home first and foundation year students at 2003/04 levels, whilst undertaking further work on factors affecting recruitment of groups under represented in this population
Under represented minority group participation of home and EU undergraduates	Review of 04/05 ethnic breakdown of first and foundation years by June 06 Action plan developed by September 06.
Participation from lower socio economic groups	To maintain the position against 2004 HESA PI location adjusted benchmark for first degree, and other undergraduates. Further develop the Academy offering, including the development of a Virtual Bradford University Academy.
Participation of students from low participation areas	Further develop the Academy offering, including the development of a Virtual Bradford University Academy. Maintain the 2004 position against benchmark for first degree and other undergraduates.
Participation of Disabled students	To maintain the position against 2004 HESA PI benchmark.
Participation of mature students	To maintain the position against 2004 HESA PI benchmark.
Participation of part time and flexible learning students	To increase the % participation of part time students in line with the aims of the Corporate Strategy

## Monitoring compliance to the agreement

The University has well established mechanisms by which it monitors its achievements in widening participation, and will continue to use these reporting mechanisms to ensure that the aims set out in this document are fulfilled. The groups currently involved are:

- Senior Management Group,
- Academic Policy Committee
- Academy Management Group,
- League Tables Working Group (in relation to HEFCE performance indicators).

The University's Corporate Strategy for 2004-09 will use a balanced scorecard approach to performance manages its achievements against key targets. This approach will enable the institution to develop and define data sets, which in turn will support the monitoring of our compliance to this access agreement, in addition to reviewing the market sensitivity issues surrounding undergraduate fee levels.

### **How access measures will complement existing activity**

The additional measures to be delivered, as part of this document are the student financial support from the £300 minimum statutory bursaries and the learning support fund. As we currently are attracting and delivering courses to a far higher percentage of students who are eligible for the maximum fee support than the national average, the provision of the bursary will ensure that access is safeguarded for those from low-income families. The presence of the learning support fund, will allow specific issues relating to specific student needs to be addressed, and in this respect will also safeguard access and support retention amongst groups at risk.

## PROPOSED TUITION FEE LEVELS FROM 2006/7

Mode of Attendance		Current Fee	Proposed	Proposed	Proposed
			£3,000	~£1200	~£600
1	Standard Undergraduate (not foundation year)	£1150	✓		
2	Thick Sandwich Undergraduate	£1150 / £560 (lower fee on full placement year)	✓		✓
3	Thin Sandwich Undergraduate	£1150 / £560 (lower fee in second half year placement)	✓		✓
4	Foundation Year (except Clinical Sciences)	£1150		✓	
5	Foundation Year in Clinical Sciences	£1150	✓		
6	Foundation Degree	£1150	✓		
7	Exchange Students	£1150 / £0	✓		