

Access Agreement

1.0 Context

- 1.1 The Arts Institute at Bournemouth (AIB) is a specialist higher education Institution with a commitment to providing all-through provision in the areas of arts, design and media from Junior Art School through further education to higher education. The Institute prides itself on providing a supportive and friendly environment which places students and their work at the centre of its community.
- 1.2 The Institute's Widening Participation funding is currently used to support both on-course activity, and outreach work.
- 1.3 On-course support includes study skills support for students with a disability through the Learning Support Unit; financial support for Educational Psychologist's reports; and a contribution to support the work of the Student Advice Centre, which provides career education, information and guidance; disability support; counselling services; and an accommodation service.
- 1.4 Outreach activity has been focused on four strands: curriculum, community, region and specialism. The Institute has always acknowledged that much of its work will have medium-term impact, as it seeks to raise aspiration.
- 1.5 Our initiatives to widen access build on these existing services and strategic priorities, but are intended to be more specifically targeted towards under-represented groups, with the aim of more immediate results.
- 1.6 Historically, the Institute has been successful in attracting students with disabilities (where its performance is significantly above the benchmark). The local demographics, as well as the nature of the course offer, has posed particular difficulties with regard to the recruitment of students from ethnic minorities, students from lower socio-economic groups, and mature students. The proposals set out in this document are intended to address these key areas.
- 1.7 The Institute has established links with a number of schools and colleges. It intends to develop further links with a wider range of institutions to support its intention to increase applications from those groups currently under-represented within its student profile. It should be noted that many students from linked schools, in particular, join the Institute as Further Education students before progressing onto HE courses. However, all students who progress from designated schools and colleges onto HE courses, via whatever route, will be included under the terms of this scheme.
- 1.8 In accordance with good practice, the Institute will extend its offers of support to students from Scotland and Wales, as well as England.
- 1.9 The Institute acknowledges that the introduction of new procedures often has unforeseen consequences, and notes that there may be particular groups of potential applicants who are disadvantaged, but who do not fall within the range of under-represented groups at whom bursaries and other means of support are targeted. We shall keep this under review

2.0 Fee limits

- 2.1 From 2006/07, the Arts Institute will charge a standard fee of £3,000 per year for all undergraduate courses. This is reflective of the high quality of education provided, and the excellent employment prospects of Arts Institute graduates, as well as the high cost of study within the arts, design and media subject areas.

- 2.2 The fee will rise with inflation in accordance with the regulations published by the government on an annual basis.
- 2.3 Students who enrol on a Foundation Degree at the Arts Institute prior to 2006/07, and who articulate to the third year of an Honours degree at the Arts Institute, will be treated as continuing students and charged the same rate for their third year as students who progress to the third year having followed the Honours degree course. This arrangement applies only to internal articulation arrangements. Any future agreement to offer guaranteed entry to students from another foundation degree would be considered on its own merits.

3.0 Amounts of additional fee income to be spent on access measures

- 3.1 The Institute has devised a range of support mechanisms to encourage applications from, and subsequent retention of, students from under-represented groups. This includes the intention to raise the total number of applications from within these groups, which makes a precise determination of the amounts required difficult. However, based on an analysis of the cohorts at the Institute in recent years, and taking into account our anticipation of future successes, the Institute estimates that approximately 20% of its additional income will be dedicated to promoting access to under-represented groups.
- 3.2 The Institute acknowledges that some of these measures will be more effective towards the later part of the period covered by this Agreement. Initially, we shall ringfence 15% of our additional fee income throughout the relevant academic year, to ensure that funding is available to support our target groups; these funds will be allocated to discretionary funds such as those to support Educational Visits, and other on-course support (see 4.3 and 4.8 below).

4.0 Bursaries and other financial support for students

Bursaries

- 4.1.1 The Institute will offer the standard £300 bursary to all students in receipt of the £2,700 grant, utilising the UUK/SCOP bursary scheme.
- 4.1.2 We shall further offer a bursary of £150 to all students who receive a grant of £1,000-2,699. These bursaries are grants which are awarded to all qualifying students.
- 4.1.3 In order to support retention, and to enable students to recoup some course costs, those students who are in receipt of a full maintenance grant will receive a further £200 when they complete their second level of study; and a further £400 when they complete their third level. (For students who undertake a foundation degree, the £400 will apply following successful articulation and completion of an Honours degree.) These additional bursaries will be paid by cheque following completion of the academic year.
- 4.1.4 All these bursaries will also rise in line with inflation, in direct correlation to the increase in our standard fee.

Course material fees

- 4.2.1 The Institute will cease charging a course material fee for all courses from 2006/07. (The average course material fee in 2004/05 is £125.) This will remove the requirement for students to pay an upfront fee in respect of certain course materials. We acknowledge that this will only be relevant insofar as it impacts upon under-represented groups, which we anticipate to be approximately 30% of each cohort.

4.3 Educational visits

- 4.3.1 In order to support their full participation in the educational experience, students from designated linked schools and colleges will be supported to participate in Educational Visits during their course of study at the Institute. We shall establish a fund to support this activity, to which students can apply for support of up to £250 during each academic year. The fund will comprise £6,000 in the first year, rising to £12,000 in the second year, and £18,000 for subsequent years (when the new fee arrangements will apply to all enrolled students).

4.4 Reduction in Institute accommodation fees

- 4.4.1 Up to 30 students from our designated widening participation target groups who apply for a place in Halls accommodation, whose home address is outside a 25-mile radius from the Institute and who otherwise fall within the criteria of acceptance for a Halls place, will receive a 25% reduction in Halls fees (in 2005/06 this would result in a fee of £2362.50 as opposed to the standard fee of £3150, a reduction of £787.50). This will apply only to first year students, but is particularly intended to support those students from outside the local community.

4.5 Travelcard vouchers

- 4.5.1 Students from the Institute's designated linked schools and colleges will receive vouchers towards local bus company travel cards, up to a total value of £300. (This represents the cost of approximately nine months free travel on either of the local bus companies' routes.) Travelcard vouchers will not be available to students in Institute accommodation.

4.6 Vouchers worth up to £150 on bicycles and accessories for all those in receipt of a maintenance grant of up to £1000

- 4.6.1 All students who are in receipt of a maintenance grant of over £1,000 will be offered vouchers to the value of £150 which can be spent on bicycles and cycling accessories. The focus on maintenance grants will extend coverage (as opposed to a strict focus on linked schools and colleges). Having purchased a bicycle, students will be offered vouchers to the value of £50 on accessories in subsequent years.

4.7 Appointment of additional member of staff to support extended availability to Institute services evenings / weekends

- 4.7.1 In order to support mature students, who are often on part-time courses or who have significant commitments outside study, opening hours for some Institute services will be extended. Further research will be conducted to determine whether this should relate to Library services, or whether access to additional computing facilities would be preferable. No fee contribution will be used to support such an extension of service.

4.8 On-course support

- 4.8.1 The Institute has already established a fund which provides emergency support for students on-course, which has been successful in supporting retention. We shall establish a further fund, which will be targeted at those students from our target groups and to which applications can be made in times of particular and unexpected hardship. This fund will be established with a minimum of £5,000 in the first year, a minimum of £15,000 in the second year, and £25,000 in the third year.

4.9 Cap for support

- 4.9.1 Having given careful consideration to the range of measures outlined above, the Institute notes that there is potential for some students to benefit substantially from a combination of these measures. In order that support is appropriately targeted, and spread fairly across the full range of students, there will be a cap on direct support, as set out in the table below:

	Cap on direct support and reimbursements	Cap including discretionary payments
Year One	1250	1400
Year Two	1000	1150
Year Three	1200	1350
TOTAL	3300	3750

4.10 Appointment of administrative staff to support the Scheme

- 4.10.1 The Institute notes that the administration of this scheme will be complex, and will appoint a dedicated member of staff to support the administration, monitoring and development of the scheme. Some further resource will be dedicated to management support and research costs.

4.12 Disability support

- 4.12.1 The Institute currently supports Educational Psychologists' reports, and applications for the Disabled Student's Allowance, through its Widening Participation funding. We also offer extensive on-course learning support, which has been effective in securing excellent retention levels for these students. We do not therefore intend to fund further work on disability support at this time, but will keep this matter under review.

5.0 Provision of information to students

- 5.1 The Institute acknowledges that the new arrangements are complicated, and that potential applicants will wish to be clear about bursary provision.
- 5.2 We shall publish a summary of our bursary provision on our website, and will also produce an information sheet which will be included with course information. The information sheet will summarise the arrangements outlined in section 4 above. We shall also target fee and support information at under-represented groups through appropriate outreach activity, and ensure that enquirers from identified linked colleges (including those who completed their compulsory education before publication of the Access Agreement) are provided with the relevant information.
- 5.3 We shall also conduct extensive staff briefings, to ensure that all those staff who come into contact with potential applicants are clear about the arrangements, and where further information can be found. We shall also consider the establishment of a dedicated session at Open Days to explain these arrangements.

6.0 Outreach work

- 6.1 The Institute conducts significant outreach work as part of its Widening Participation Strategy, which includes on-course support for students. This work will be extended to develop partnerships with new schools and colleges in support of our recruitment of under-represented groups, which will in turn necessitate the allocation of additional resource through the period of this Agreement.
- 6.2 Following the identification of appropriate schools and colleges, which may not be from the local area, we shall seek to develop links which will both raise aspiration within the organisation, and encourage application to the Institute. This will include visits to the Institute

for taster-days, and the opportunity to meet with current staff and students, as well as work within the schools and colleges.

- 6.3 The funding allocation to outreach reflects the fact that much of this work is already conducted through our Widening Participation Strategy, but that this work will develop and extend throughout the period of the Agreement.

7.0 Milestones

- 7.1 The Institute considers that performance against the HEFCE Performance Indicators would present the most straightforward and objective mechanism to measure its achievement in widening access.
- 7.2 We are disappointed that these Indicators are released a year following the year to which they relate, and consequently do not permit a swift response to developing issues; however, we shall also monitor these same indicators internally to ensure that we are well placed to understand the impact of our work.
- 7.3 We also note that some of the Performance Indicators relate to the full student cohort, and hence the full impact of our access arrangements will not be evident until the third cohort has been enrolled (or potentially the fourth cohort, given the potential for student deferral in the first year). This further emphasises the need for the Institute to monitor its own data, to provide a clear indicator of performance.
- 7.4 The targets for the first three years of the Access Agreement are set out in Appendix One (which also gives 2002/03 performance against the relevant benchmarks, where these are available). These targets will be kept under review on an annual basis. Targets for 2009/10 and subsequent years will be developed such that targets are established for three years in advance. However, we consider that a review of the effectiveness of the various mechanisms outlined in this document, and of their impact on our recruitment, is necessary before we establish targets beyond this three-year period.

8.0 Institutional monitoring arrangements

- 8.1 The Institute receives an annual report on its Widening Participation activity which reports on activity, and outcomes. The report is considered in detail by both Equality and Inclusivity Committee and by Institute Standards and Quality Committee, with a summary report made to Academic Board. The clearer milestones and targets outlined in this Access Agreement will enable a more evaluative consideration of progress, and a regular review of success.
- 8.2 The continuous monitoring of performance against target, and of take-up of the various access measures, will also enable these measures to be amended where appropriate to ensure that the identified groups are reached.
- 8.3 Specifically, the Institute has considered a number of further measures which it might wish to introduce to support its target groups. These include further support for course materials; support for entry to competitions; and additional support for its outreach work. Our analysis of our success during the first year of operation will provide information about the take-up of the respective offers, which will in turn inform revisions to the Agreement as appropriate.

Appendix One: Targets 2006/09

Group	Location adjusted benchmark 02/03	Performance 02/03	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09
Young full-time undergraduate entrants					
From lower socio-economic groups	28.7	25	26.5	28	29.5
From low participation neighbourhoods	10.8	5.8	7	9	11
Mature full-time undergraduate entrants					
Proportion who are mature		40.7			
FT / PT (for reference)		32/85			
No previous HE & from low participation neighbourhood	10.4	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5
Ethnic minority first year students (UK domiciled) (%)					
		3.0	5	7	9
Non-continuation (not in HE)					
Young	8.1	5.6	5.2	4.8	4.5
Mature	13.1	18.3	16	14	12
All students	9.4	9.1	8.9	8.7	8.5
Young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	10.6	17.4	15	12.5	10
Young entrants from other neighbourhoods	7.7	4.4	4.25	4.1	4.0
Mature entrants with no previous HE qualification*					
Mature entrants with previous HE qualification	12.8	20.3	18	16	14
Percentage in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance					
Full-time undergraduate	6.0	6.5	8	10	12
Part-time undergraduate	3.1	1.6	2.2	2.7	3.2

* The numbers in this category are too small to be recorded