

Keele University Access Agreement

July 2008

“It is a good thing you are doing, and for one that worked hard at college it was both a confidence booster of my abilities and also a very generous award. It highlighted the idea that if you work hard, good things will happen.”

Feedback from a Keele student, 2008

1. Proposed fees and bursaries

- 1.1 In 2009/10, Keele University intends to charge UK and EU students £3225 per year in respect of any undergraduate degree course and for the PGCE.
- 1.2 Keele University confirms that it will pay the mandatory bursary of £319 in 2009-10 to all students in receipt of a full maintenance grant. In addition Keele will offer additional income-contingent support for students, which is described in this Access Agreement. In total Keele will continue to plan to spend 20% of additional fee income on bursaries, scholarships and outreach programmes.
- 1.3 All students will be informed of the cost of tuition fees in writing when they receive an offer of a place at Keele: this information will, of course, be available in pre-application promotional material from Keele, and on the Keele web site. The funding details will also be available through the Student Loans Company web-based funding information.

2. Background

- 2.1 Keele University has always occupied a distinct place in UK higher education. The University was founded on the principle of interdisciplinary education, sustained to this day through its Dual Honours two-subject degree programmes and first-year programme of additional modules. Although the demands of the student market, and the requirements of professional bodies, have led to the development of certain single honours programmes, 80% of Keele's current first-year students are taking Dual Honours programmes. Keele's mission statement states that the institution aspires to be the “UK's leading open, integrated, intellectual community”
- 2.2 Since 2006 Keele has charged the maximum allowed tuition fee for all of its undergraduate degree courses and the PGCE. This decision took into account: Keele's success in widening participation; its extremely strong graduation rate and high graduate employment percentage; the high quality student experience that we offer; and the need to be able to invest in teaching facilities and in our campus environment. Put simply, we believe that the value we offer students, our package of financial support (see below) and the support available through mandatory bursaries and Government grants will allow all students to take advantage of Keele's distinctive education and student experience and ultimately to gain a personal and financial benefit from that education and experience.

2.3 From 2006-2008, Keele offered a distinctive portfolio of bursaries and scholarships spanning academic excellence, support for important work experience and study abroad opportunities, fostering of key WP links with partnership schools, and special support for medical students, those taking the new Foundation Year and for students from ethnic minority communities. Keele's scheme was one of the finalists in the category "Outstanding Student Financial Support Package" in the 2006 *Times Higher Education Supplement* Awards.

2.4 Feedback from Keele students confirmed the importance of providing funding support, as the following examples demonstrate:

"The Keele bursary allowed me to buy books and pay for transport to and from Keele, enhancing my studies and allowing my to achieve high results."

"The bursary has allowed me the chance to attend university, as the rising costs of studying higher education was worrying when I was considering attending. The bursary has helped in part to go towards accommodation costs and books for my History course, which requires lots of reading, and allowed me to attend the Geography field trip to Barcelona this year. The bursary has also helped to encourage me to work hard and keep my results high."

"It rid me of financial worries and helped me concentrate on my studies more, it allowed me to participate in activities I would not have been able to do before. It also reduced the strain on a single working mother of financial worries."

2.5 After three years the Keele scheme was reviewed and University also examined national research on student finance, particularly the research carried out for the Sutton Trust. The University established the following principles for its funding support from 2009-10 onwards:

- (a) as accessibility of information on student finance has been identified as an issue nationally, Keele must provide clear guidance, and guarantees of funding, at the start of each UCAS application cycle;
- (b) the sums of money guaranteed to low-income students must be well above the mandatory bursary, as studies showed that this would widen participation in higher education;
- (c) there should be an element of rewarding attainment, not least because low-income, high achieving students have a high awareness of attainment-based bursaries;
- (d) the KeeleLink bursary was strategically important to Keele, in its regional work, and should be retained;
- (e) the Care Leavers' bursary reached some of the most disadvantaged prospective students and should be retained;
- (f) the Study Abroad bursaries allowed low-income students to take advantage of a major educational and personal development opportunity and should be retained.

3. Bursaries and Scholarships

- 3.1 Keele's revised bursaries and scholarships scheme for 2009-10 onwards is as follows:

Keele Bursary

A guaranteed bursary of £800 per year of study for students with a family income of £25k or less. This sum includes the mandatory bursary.

Keele Scholarship

A guaranteed scholarship of £1000 per year of study for students gaining 3 A grades at A-level (or equivalent), with a family income of £40k or less;

KeeleLink Award

A guaranteed scholarship of £400 per year of study for all students at KeeleLink schools (see below) who have a family income of below £40k and who achieve their conditional offer from Keele.

Keele Care Leavers' Bursary

A guaranteed bursary for leavers of care, of £1000, £1500 and £2000 for years 1, 2 and 3 of study respectively.

Keele Study Abroad Bursary

A bursary of £500 will be issued to 20 students who have a family income of under £40k, for their period overseas. Students will make a brief application for this bursary.

- 3.2 The elements of the scheme are cumulative: for instance a student at a KeeleLink school with a family income of under £25k and who gained three grade As at A-level would receive the Keele Bursary, the Keele Scholarship and the KeeleLink Award - a total of £2200. This potential accumulation of benefits will be strongly promoted to students: a "ready reckoner" (web-based if possible) will be developed.
- 3.3 With the exception of the Study Abroad scheme, all the others are guaranteed so students do not have to make a separate application for these: income eligibility will be determined through the SLC and attainment information will be provided by Keele's Admissions Office. Care Leavers' will be identified by declaration on the UCAS form and contacted at an early stage in their application to advise them of the funding available to them.
- 3.4 Keele will continue its policy of directing the funding support to students who are only eligible for the basic maintenance support: income-eligible PGCE and undergraduate Social Work students will only receive mandatory bursaries, as these students receive additional Government funding for their programmes alongside possible maintenance grants and no funding is available to students on programmes attracting NHS bursaries.

- 3.5 The new scheme means that all students in receipt of the maximum maintenance grant will receive more than the mandatory bursary funding and about a third of each year's undergraduate intake can have other funding support.

4. Outreach activity

- 4.1 Keele is proud of its nationally recognised reputation for widening participation. Keele's widening participation work has been consistently categorised as "exemplary" by HEFCE and we also meet or exceed our HEFCE performance indicator benchmarks. Keele has received awards for the quality of its new media outreach packages.
- 4.2 In 2008/9 Keele will use its HEFCE WP and Retention Grant to fund both central activities, including permanent staff in our Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning Unit (WP and LLN) and in the Centre for Learning and Student Support, and support and activities in Faculties: new posts are being established to coordinate outreach and support for non-traditional students in each Faculty. The WP and LLN Unit runs a variety of projects to help improve aspiration and attainment in school students, including Homework Clubs and subject mentoring, and the Unit manages the TDA-funded Student Associates Scheme.
- 4.3 Keele intends to invest a proportion of its additional tuition fee income in further outreach activities to reach those categories of students for whom our bursaries are aimed, and to provide guidance and support for them and their parents in making HE choices. A major part of this is in supporting the KeeleLink partnerships, which allow selected schools and colleges to work with Keele in a structured way so that as many school and college students can benefit from university experiences. Currently there are over 110 KeeleLink partner schools and colleges in twelve counties, from Shropshire to Derbyshire; Birmingham to Lancashire: Keele engages particularly with local schools and colleges in Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire and at least sixty of the member schools and colleges are located in deprived communities with a high need for outreach intervention to improve aspiration and progression beyond compulsory education. Keele also works closely with Aimhigher partners from regions such as Liverpool, Cheshire and Warrington, Shropshire Telford and Wrekin, Stoke and Staffordshire and West Midlands. More information is available at www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/widening/keelelink.html
- 4.4 The changes to the administration of student funding from Local Authorities to the Student Loans Company places more onus on universities to provide financial information and guidance. The Student Financial Support Office has, over the past three years, worked in partnership with our local universities to give talks and one-to-one guidance to students and parents on the funding available, as well as providing talks and information sessions at Keele Open Days. As part of our revised funding scheme, additional monies will be available to enhance this work.
- 4.5 In summary, Keele has invested, and will continue to invest, in: guidance for students, teachers and parents, particularly on financial aspects of HE study; aspiration and awareness-raising events; and campus experiences. We will develop annual plans for outreach, based on feedback from students and

from our KeeleLink partnership schools. This will ensure that our outreach work remains of absolute relevance to our local and regional students and their advisors.

5. Monitoring

- 5.1 In the first Access Agreement (from 200%) Keele sought a minimum improvement of 10% per annum on recruitment from ethnic minority groups, and a minimum 5% increase in recruitment over the first two years in each of the following: mature students, students from rural areas and students from target locations identified by GIS deprivation indices. The monitoring report to OFFA in July 2007 showed that we had met or exceeded these initial targets. We expect these student numbers to grow at 3-5% per annum.
- 5.2 We are aiming for a 5% annual increase in enrolments from KeeleLink schools and colleges, monitored against the 2008 figures.
- 5.3 The revised funding scheme will reach more students than previously: we will monitor and report against the 2008/9 funded student numbers.
- 5.4 Keele undertakes to continue to monitor compliance with this Access Agreement and progress towards milestones annually, with a full report being sent to the University Council and OFFA, as required.

HT/11 July 2008