

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

ACCESS AGREEMENT Revised November 2010

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Introduction

Newman University College, Birmingham, is proud of its record in widening both access and participation. The College regularly outperforms its benchmarks for attracting students both from less advantaged backgrounds and from low participation neighbourhoods. Newman University College makes a major contribution to the provision of higher education opportunities for such communities because of its geographical location in, and closeness to, some of the most deprived wards in England, and also because of its well established connections with schools and colleges through its teacher training and professional development programmes. The Catholic mission of Newman University College also contributes to the institution's commitment to creating educational opportunities that enable individuals to reach their full potential. The College is fully engaged in AimHigher in Birmingham and Solihull.

Underlying Principles of the Newman University College Access Agreement

Newman will work to the following principles:

- a) Quality - the College strives to offer higher education of the best possible quality to all its students and uses additional income to enhance quality
- b) Attractiveness and accessibility - the College seeks to provide high quality infrastructure that enables all students, including those with disabilities, to access its programmes and courses easily
- c) Fairness - in making decisions about student support, the College will take appropriate account of a broad range of factors impacting on a student's economic circumstances
- d) Inclusion and widening participation – the College's scheme is underpinned by a commitment to ensuring the widest possible range of students have access to higher education
- e) Sustainability – in deciding on the best use of any additional income, the College will prioritise the development of relevant and sustainable learning opportunities

Duration of Access Agreement

Newman University College intends to review its Access Agreement annually and therefore this agreement refers to 2011/12 intake.

Scope of agreement and intended fee levels

This agreement refers to new full time undergraduate and PGCE students who pay fees of £3375 in 2011/12. Continuing students will continue to receive the bursaries that were originally offered when they started their course.

Increases in fees will be applied where approved by the government.

Access measures

Given the current profile of Newman University College students, it has been decided to provide many of full time students who study at Newman University College with a bursary. This is in the spirit of the College's mission and effectively limits the fee for every programme and course to a maximum of £3025 to eligible students. It ensures that the minimum level of bursary support is offered to all students on full state support.

The University College will use the model bursary scheme to assess residual income and will then apply student bursary support for target groups in accordance with the income band detailed below.

Bursary Support: 2011/12 Academic Year (First Year students)

Household Income Up to £25,000 Bursary: £350

No other bursary support, including scholarship bursaries, is available for any student unless advised in writing by the University College Admissions Unit.

Assessment of eligibility

This will be in accordance with the model bursary scheme for minimum bursary requirements. All students are required to access maintenance grants/loans via the Student Loan Company (SLC) as the assessment and transmission of bursary awards is based on data submitted to the SLC.

Payment of bursaries

These will be paid in 3 instalments during the year.

Provision of information to students

All prospective applicants to Newman University College will be provided with information via the prospectus, the website and material available at Open Days, Family Evenings and College or school based AimHigher events.

In addition, Newman will target under represented communities through mailshots, the use of school partnership networks, compact partnerships and AimHigher programmes. Customised material will be provided for target groups. This information will be provided throughout the year. The College will develop material to provide specific advice to students and will work in conjunction with its validating university to do this. Such material will include information on the following:

- Fee levels (by programme and mode)
- Bursary availability (by income level and programme)
- State support availability (by income level and programme)
- Accommodation costs
- Cost of living averages
- Details of SLC
- Student support mechanisms
- Financial management advice
- Debt counselling and support

Outreach activity

Newman University College engages in a wide range of outreach activity. As a smaller HEI we currently work with a small College team plus the range of local AimHigher workers. We have invested substantially in staff with the appropriate expertise to support families with little experience of higher education in learning more about what higher education has to offer and how it can be planned for.

The College also provides regular family events in specific schools and wards including those with a high number of students who do not currently access higher education. This includes schools in Walsall, Dudley, South West Birmingham and North Worcestershire.

Range of additional outreach activities

These include:

Master classes	10 per annum
Family information evenings	5 per annum
Sixth form conferences	3 per annum
School based talks	up to 20 per annum

Taster days	3 per department
Shadow a student days	As requested
Mentoring	A range of mentor programmes
Recruitment events for refugee families	2 per annum
Subject based Summer Schools	Annually

Compact arrangements

Newman University College has already developed a number of compact arrangements with schools, Colleges and FE partners. These are usually tailor made for particular departments. The College is developing a more strategic approach to compact arrangements across the region.

Milestones

Newman is already exceeding benchmarks and currently attracts 47% of its students from lower income groups and 30% from low participation families. The University College seeks to maintain this position. Further information is available within our Widening Participation Strategic Assessment.

Monitoring of the Access Agreement

Newman University College will monitor this agreement through

- Analysis of applications, acceptances and registrations
- Evaluation of the scheme for bursary awards
- Analysis of retention data and of progression data
- HESA performance indicators

Monitoring is primarily the responsibility of the Academic Board (student recruitment, progress and retention). An annual report is presented to the Board of Governors on widening access and participation. The Equality and Diversity Committee monitors the impact of policy on target groups.