

The University of East London

Access Agreement – October 2007

This access agreement covers the period 2006-11

Our achievements

We continue to be one of the leading universities in the United Kingdom offering students opportunities to improve their position in life. Key characteristics of our student body within the original application and this update are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Proportions of full-time undergraduate EU students with a variety of widening participation characteristics.

	Students with a disability receiving the disabled students allowance	Students aged over 30 on entry	Students from East London	Black and Minority Ethnic Students	% of students EU country of Domicile (excluding England and Wales)
2000-01	3.0%	17.8%	46.6%	52.8%	8.6%
2001-02	4.9%	17.8%	48.0%	54.9%	7.6%
2002-03	7.1%	18.3%	49.3%	54.1%	6.9%
2003-04	8.1%	20.4%	49.5%	56.5%	6.2%
2004-05	5.1%	19.8%	49.3%	56.8%	6.8%
2005-06	7.4%	20.7%	50.1%	59.4%	6.3%
2006-07	7.0%	20.7%	52.0%	66.0%	6.3%

We continue to perform above benchmark for the proportion of our students with a disability. The significant proportion of our student body being mature continues. For this update as in the original application we continue to use a slightly more demanding definition of mature (that is to say aged over 30 on entry to the programme). A substantial proportion of our students are seizing a “second-chance” opportunity. Half of our students continue to come from East London. Our access agreement is not the place to explore the geography of disadvantage within London but in general, residents of East London are characterised by lower wages, higher unemployment, Lower participation in post compulsory education and training, and fewer level 3 academic qualifications than other sub-regions of the capital. We are serving our local population to address those issues. This year we have observed a

significant increase in the number of our students who have categorised themselves as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME). Additionally many do not have English as their first language, nor is it the spoken language within the family home.

It can be seen that we are currently making powerful contribution to improving the life chances of a student body that is rich in characteristics that have traditionally distinguished people with disadvantages.

Widening and deepening access at UEL

Our student profile (see table 1 above) reflects our long standing commitment to widening access to groups traditionally under-represented in higher education and is very different to that of a hypothetical average university. We are a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural institution. We take pride in our inclusiveness and our commitment to providing access to higher education for socially disadvantaged groups.

Comparative data from HESA indicates that we recruit significantly more mature students and students from minority ethnic backgrounds than comparable institutions. In addition, geo-demographic data supplied by HEFCE and used as the basis for calculating the widening participation premium still indicates that UEL recruits some one-fifth of new entrants and one-third of mature entrants from the lowest socio-economic classification.

Tuition fees and achievement against scholarship and bursary targets set in the original agreement.

The level of tuition fees at UEL for undergraduates is as follows:

- 2006-07 £3,000
- 2007-08 £3,070
- 2008-09 £3,145

We agreed to offer and achieved the following (summarised in Table 2 below):

Minimum Standard Bursary (MSB)

Each full time undergraduate student who (or PGCE student) who meet the eligibility criteria in 2007-08 will receive £300 paid into their bank account towards their maintenance costs. The bursary levels will be adjusted annually to reflect any increases in student tuition fees.

The UEL Achievement Scholarship

We have in the past and will continue to award 200 new scholarships each year worth £1,000 apiece. These will be awarded on the basis of academic achievement broadly defined – including for example sporting achievement and achievement in the performing arts. Current analysis of our 2007-08 entry shows the following:

Ethnic Group	Proportion of total awards
Asian	15%
Black	18%
White	43%
Mixed	7%
Other	17%

For future years we will analyse the data further in order to assess which groups of our community are benefiting from this award.

The UEL Progress Bursary

We proposed to apply some of the additional income that arose from the government's policy on "top-up" fees to providing bursaries in kind, initially at £500 for the 1st year of study. Whilst these bursaries are not specifically directed to under-represented groups alone the majority of such bursaries are likely to be claimed from students from such backgrounds. We believe that bursaries of this nature will improve our retention of undergraduate students. We will also pay Progress Bursaries of £300 in years 2 and 3. The payments represent approximately 26% of the additional fee income that we receive.

Part-Time Bursary

We propose to put in a bursary scheme to support our part-time undergraduate students. We believe our part-time programmes also offer valuable opportunities for students to improve their life chances. This was set at 50% of the proposed fee per module, initially £500 in 2006-07. The bursary is a reduction in the fee and not an award like the Progress Bursary. The levels will be adjusted annually to reflect any increases in student tuition fees.

Outreach activities

Our intention is to maintain and extend our strategic partnerships with education and training providers and other organisations in public, private, voluntary and community sectors in order to identify, encourage and support new groups of potential learners and to develop new flexible educational progression routes for young people and adults, whilst maintaining our strong links with local and regional access courses. Previously we proposed to fund 2 posts which we have and will continue to do so.

Other initiatives

Finally we proposed that UEL would contribute to the development costs and participate in an innovative lifelong learning centre in conjunction with Barking and Dagenham Council and Barking Collage in Barking Town Centre. This has been completed and UEL started to deliver programmes in September 2007.

Table 2: Latest information on total estimated cost of outreach and access measures:

£000's	2006-07 (budget)	2006-07 (actual)	2007-08 (B)	2008-09 (B)	2009-10 (B)	2010- 2011 (B)
Minimum Student Bursaries	389	376	731	1,055	1,113	1,140
Academic Achievement Scholarships	200	200	200	200	200	200
Bursaries in kind	1,583	1,510	3,600	6,400	6,400	6,400
Additional out-reach workers	80	76	84	88	92	96
Total	2,252	2,162	3,415	4,043	4,105	4,136

These figures do not include the administrative costs of supporting this scheme.

Monitoring our performance

For our own purposes we have a number of indicators from our Management Information System that we can use to track our performance in widening participation. For our access agreement we concluded that we should use information that is readily available through a HESA dataset. One of the advantages this brings is ready comparison with our universities.

After consideration we concluded that the best indicator for benchmark purposes is given in Table T1b of the standard HESA performance indicators and in particular younger FT undergraduate students from the "lower" social classes. (Virtually all our UK students come from state schools so it would be pointless to set ourselves a target of increasing this proportion).

Table 3: Proportion of young FT undergraduates from “lower” social classes shown in performance indicator table T1b.

Year	Our proportion	Benchmark
2000-2001	42%	34%
2001-02	45%	34%
2002-03	43%	37%
2003-04	42%	37%
2004-05	40%	37%
2005-06	49%	38%

Sources: HESA website for data for the most recent three years and HEFCE website for the earlier two years.

In our original application we made a commitment to achieve a proportion of at least 40% throughout the period of the access agreement. We have seen significant increase in the proportion for 2006-07 and we will continue to monitor in future years.