Enclosure D

OFFA

Access Agreement

For Approval

OFFA

Context

The University of Plymouth seeks to deliver research and teaching to world class standards, to foster scholarship and culture, to serve its region in an open and accessible way and to develop responsible and critical students from a diverse social and cultural background.

As part of its regional and widening participation mission the University remains committed to ensuring equality of access to its courses from all sections of the community and will seek to ensure that its admissions, bursary and scholarship policies will remain clear, well articulated and supportive. Our intention in this document is to set out the range of support available to ensure that as wide a range of students as possible will benefit from the education the University can provide.

Fee Limits

The University of Plymouth made the decision to charge students the £3,000 fee for all courses from 2006 onwards reflecting the quality and reputation of its courses and the major investments in its campus estates. The only exceptions to this policy relate to Access to Science and Access to Technology (Extended Science and Extended Technology) courses which will charge a standard fee without top-up.

Fees have increased at an inflationary level, and for 2008/9 will be £3145 for most degrees, and £1275 for the Access to Science and Technology courses.

The University of Plymouth confirms that it will provide at least the minimum level of bursary support to students on full state support and intends to adopt the UUK/SCOP model bursary scheme.

As part of its regional mission the University provides HE in FE in partnership with FE Colleges across the SW peninsula, through an indirect funding agreement with the Colleges. The University's partner colleges are:
Bicton College
Bridgwater College
City of Bristol College
City College, Plymouth
Cornwall College [including Duchy and St. Austell Colleges]
East Devon College
Exeter College
North Devon College
Somerset College of Arts and Technology
South Devon College
Stroud College
Truro College [including Penwith College]

Weymouth College

Tuition fees for foundation degrees at these colleges will range from £1600 to £2200 for 2008/9 for foundation degrees, and are generally £3145 for honours degrees. The statutory minimum bursary is payable where applicable, and colleges are providing a range of other bursaries between £200 and £900.
Students progressing to the University of Plymouth to top up a foundation degree will be charged fees of £3145, and for their top up year[s] will be eligible for the University's range of bursaries and scholarships.

Partner Colleges will continue to receive a proportion of the University's Access to Learning Funds for the benefit of HE students in hardship and the UPC Faculty contributes to the main WP funded portfolio of outreach activities of the University.

The University of Plymouth and University of Exeter jointly manage admissions to the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry. Students are currently allocated randomly to the constituent universities. PCMD has its own bursaries which are administered manually, however the University of Plymouth ensures that relevant students receive their statutory [i.e. the Plymouth] bursary.

Bursaries and Other Financial Support for Students

The University of Plymouth has a long established record for widening participation in HE both directly into the University and through its network of Partner Colleges in the South West of England. As part of that mission we set in place a range of bursary and other support measures for our students in 2006 which were designed to be flexible and supportive. At the time we stated that these would be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and well targeted.

The time for review has arrived and from 2008 we wish to offer a simpler but more generous bursary package which will benefit more students and ensure that the proportion of tuition fee income set aside for this purpose is used to the full.

The new package will be available from 2008. Continuing students will receive support under our original agreement for the duration of their courses, though amounts will be subject to an inflationary increase.

New Bursary Package

Plymouth Bursary

We will continue to award the statutory bursary available to all those paying deferred tuition fees, and in receipt of the full low income maintenance grant. For 2008 entry, this bursary will encompass those with household incomes up to £25,000 in accordance with the government's raising of the income threshold for receiving the full grant. We are not restricting this to those paying

the maximum tuition fees, it will also be paid to those on our Extended Science and Technology courses, where a lower fee is charged. This bursary will be £315 for 2008/9

Two-Tier University Bursary
To replace the Compact, Access and Peninsula bursaries outlined in our agreement of 2006, we will now be offering a simple two-tiered bursary based on household income alone. This will be reviewed annually.

Tier one
A payment of £700 for those with residual household incomes of £25,000 or less. Since all those in this income category will also receive the Plymouth bursary, the support received by each of these students will total £1015.

Tier two
There will be a payment of £300 for those with residual household incomes of between £25,001 and £40,000. This extension of the income threshold will ensure more students receive some extra support.

Relocation bursary for independently assessed students
We will continue to offer this bursary to relevant students who are relocating to the University's area in order to take up a higher education course where deferred fees are charged. The bursary will cover relocation expenses to a maximum of £1575, and the budget set aside for this will be £53500.

Independent student hardship bursary
We will continue to offer a start up bursary to independently assessed students who have been in receipt of Income Support or one of the disability benefits for at least six months prior to the start of their course. This bursary will be £535 and the budget set aside will be £53500. This will help to ensure that those who have been on a very low income for a period of time will not be deterred by the cost of attending university.

Care Leavers Bursary
Care leavers who enrol as students at the University will receive £1,000 in addition to entitlement to other bursaries and scholarships.

Increased Hardship Funds
The University of Plymouth recognises the importance of **retaining** students who have committed themselves to HE study. Since 2006, extra funds for student hardship have been provided, and these have proved a lifeline for many students. The plan is to increase extra hardship support to in excess of £1m for 2008/9. These hardship funds are distributed along with the Access to Learning Fund, however the criteria for assistance extends also to EU students.

Disability Support
The University of Plymouth has a strong record of attracting and supporting students with a wide range of disabilities. Funding already exists through a range of channels for funding disabled students, however experience show

that there are always some “who fall through the net”. Given the University’s commitment to disabled students a fund of £50,000 per year will be set aside to assist these students once they have enrolled. Funds will also be set aside to provide a new Mental Health Worker in the university’s Disability Assist Unit

Scholarships
The university’s range of scholarships has been simplified, and now consists of:

Fieldwork Scholarship
An amount of up to £350 towards each compulsory field trip on relevant courses – meaning in effect that most trips will be free of charge to the student.

Studio and Laboratory Scholarship
For students whose courses incur art and design studio costs or laboratory costs, these costs will be met on the student’s behalf.

Marine Sports Scholarship
The university is proud of its marine sports facilities and wishes to attract those who excel at marine sports at a national or international level. A scholarship of £1500 is thus being offered.

To sum up, the university’s package of bursaries, scholarships and other types of support has been simplified to reach a greater number of students whilst keeping administrative costs to a minimum.

Provision of Information to Students

The university has undertaken extensive communications activity to promote awareness of its bursary scheme, using a combination of online and offline methods to audiences such as potential students, applicants, parents, teachers and advisors. Activities include:

- Fees and funding leaflets for enquirers and applicants
- Improved web pages with one url www.plymouth.ac.uk/money
- Open day and course preview day presentations. Finance DVD for all applicants
- Student funding unit providing a one stop shop for enquiries.
- E-newsletters to enquirers advising and linking to one url

Outreach Work

The University of Plymouth has a national and international reputation for its WP outreach, transition and on-course support activities to widen participation in HE. The existing University of Plymouth institutional WP activities include:

- Tasters (40); residentials (10); mentoring schemes with 7 schools involving 200+ school pupils and 60 undergraduate students; activities with parents and key influencers; visits on campus with cohorts from 25+ target schools; a comprehensive portfolio of events with Year 11 and 12 in 18 Compact schools (90 events per annum)
- Interventions to support prospective target "mature" students (over 21 years) through the University's Routes to HE Enquiry Service. This also includes 2 visits a year to Access to HE student groups throughout the South West region.
- Outreach work facilitated by the Central WP team reaching 9,529 participants 2006-7
- Faculty based subject specific WP outreach activities which reached 10,399 participants in 2006-7 in total. This includes the STOP (Science Technology Opportunities Project) programme; Access to Medicine Initiative; Creative Arts WP programme; Faculty of Health and Social Work programme; Faculty of Social Science and Business WP programme to name but a few
- An extensive set of pre-entry and on-course initiatives with disabled students and students with dyslexia (approx 2,000 plus disabled students supported in 2006-7)
- Community outreach projects with BME prospective students and positive action initiatives to support subject specific areas of gender imbalance (e.g. Community Outreach though staff and student volunteering; Community Action Research projects; links with Racial Equality "Respect" festival; specific actions with Chinese community; women/girls into Science and Technology projects).

In addition to this extensive portfolio of current WP outreach activities (supported by WP Core Premium funding) the University of Plymouth plays a key role in the delivery of the collaborative Aimhigher Peninsula Programme (covering Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset). Of particular note is the University's' role in:

- The management, administration and development of the programme since its inception. For 2008-11 the University will be the Lead HEI for the APP (Aimhigher Peninsula Programme) with all requisite responsibilities that the role entails
- The lead role of the University for certain strands within the programme namely
    - ❖ Strand 1 work with target schools – Raising aspirations from Year 7 to and including Year 11 in the proposed progression framework of intervention activities with target cohorts of school

students. This also involves some work, as a universal entitlement, with all 101 secondary schools in the SW Peninsula

- ❖ The management and delivery of the Aimhigher Healthcare Strand through the University's' Faculty of Health and Social Work for 2008-9 (continuation funding for 2009-11 to be confirmed)
- ❖ Delivery of the "Engaging Ability" Strand relating to work with disabled learners (through the University's Disability Assist Unit).

In addition to the above, the University contributes to all strands of work within the current and proposed Aimhigher Peninsula Programme for 2008-11.

The University of Plymouth intends to add to this portfolio of WP outreach activity, through its OFFA agreement by providing an additional 75k (2007-8), 100k (2008-9) and 125k (2009-10) for additional WP outreach activity as follows:

Additional Institutional WP Outreach supported through fee income 2007-2010

This summary outlines the areas of work additional to our core central and faculty WP portfolio and will be reported on separately as part of our OFFA agreement.

1. Additional Compact Activity

   The University has operated a portfolio of outreach activity with key target Compact WP schools in the SW Peninsula since 2003-4. The menu of activities on offer has been extensive, and the Compact has to date focussed on post-16 activities with 18 target compact schools. Year on year, the compact has seen an increase in participation and progression rates from these schools onto HE, and to the University. Additional money will be used to:
   - support an increase in the number of WP target schools who can participate in the Compact scheme to 20 schools
   - extend the range of outreach activities from post-16 school students to 14-19 year school students.

2. Additional Faculty WP Activities

   Faculties all produce annual WP action plans for devolved core WP funded activities. Faculties will have additional funding to work on identified additional WP activities

3. The expansion of Plymouth Undergraduate Student Shadowing Scheme (PLUSS)

   The Plymouth Undergraduate Student Shadowing Scheme had, in its initial stages of development 2006-7 been supported through external

funding. The scheme will now be continued, supported and developed institutionally. The scheme will thus:

- be fully embedded into the University's institutional WP outreach portfolio
- extend the number of opportunities for WP profile Year 11, 12 school students from all Plymouth secondary schools. This includes the opportunity to experience firsthand, 'a day in the life of' and follow up mentoring with a trained subject-matched undergraduate student at the University and access to information and advice.
- extend geographical coverage of the scheme to include WP school students from all University Compact Schools (now 20) across the SW Peninsula.

4. HE Information, Advice, and Guidance

   Outreach WP activities which raise awareness and aspirations for targeted individuals and groups, will be further strengthened in their aim to realise and support actual progression to Level 3 and 4 study. The addition of a part-time 0.5 Information, Advice, Guidance and Support officer supported through OFFA money will ensure this. The post will be based in the central WP team but will work across a wide portfolio of WP outreach activity.

5. University Community Engagement activities aimed at WP Target groups

   'Influencing the Influencers' – parents, carers, youth leaders, community organisations and activists etc is absolutely key to the WP agenda, hence funding support for a cross University community open day – designed to break down barriers for key influencers particularly aiming to reach those individuals and groups who have not before stepped over the University's front door. Similar events are planned and follow-up WP community outreach will promote the longer term relationships necessary to ensure this dimension is not a 'one-off' intervention.

Impact measurement will be enhanced through full quantitative and qualitative evaluation supported by improved data.

Milestones and Monitoring

The University has to date an established record of meeting and exceeding most HEFCE bench marks in terms of Access and Widening Participation. The University will continue to further develop current arrangements for monitoring progression in improving access and impact measures within this agreement. The following points are significant:

- Setting annual targets for Widening Participation activities through annual action plans and monitoring reports at Faculty and institutional

level. This will include reporting on additional outreach activities identified within this agreement. This will be reported separately for 2007-8, 2008-9, 2009-10.

- Established committee and reporting mechanisms will be used internally to monitor progress. They include the University's WP Strategic Planning Group, Equal Opportunities Committee, Senior Management Team and Governing Body. Widening Participation is the specific line management responsibility of the designated Deputy Vice Chancellor with line management responsibility for WP.
- The University will also build on its knowledge of qualitative evaluation data relating to impact of WP interventions, and experiences of WP groups pre, on course and on exit. The new entrant's survey and deadlines will be used to monitor access and information issues.
- The University will continue to monitor its performance relating to WP Performance Indicators
- In the event of disappointing performance against location adjusted benchmarks, the University has established a Strategic group (the OFFA Implementation group) to review and make appropriate adjustments to our bursary and scholarship policies

The University will provide a summary annual report on additional WP Outreach as part of our return to OFFA.

.