



UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

ACCESS AGREEMENT 2012/13

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# University of Portsmouth Access Agreement 2012/13

## Executive Summary

The University of Portsmouth is strongly committed to widening participation and has a successful track record of both recruiting and retaining students from target parts of the community. Our student profile and location in a city with areas of significant deprivation mean that continued success in widening participation is essential to the University's future success and viability.

The University's proposal to charge a headline fee of £8,500 for full-time undergraduate courses is supported by investment in fee waivers, bursaries and hardship funds well beyond the level recommended by OFFA, to ensure that students who can benefit from courses at the University are not prevented from attending or continuing due to financial hardship.

This financial support will be reinforced by an effective outreach programme, with innovative approaches such as using sport to promote the accessibility of higher education along with more academically focused activities. We provide comprehensive financial advice to applicants and their families and practical support to our undergraduates. Tailored support is available to priority groups including care leavers and applicants with disabilities.

Promoting widening participation is built into our core processes, through sensitive use of contextual data for applicants and acceptance of a broad range of entry qualifications. There is strong staff support and understanding for this approach.

We also offer flexible programmes including Foundation Degrees, part-time and distance learning courses which promote access. We are investigating opportunities to extend these flexible routes.

We have set challenging targets to improve our recruitment and retention of widening participation students from a relatively high base and will actively monitor our performance.

# University of Portsmouth Access Agreement 2012/13

## 1. PURPOSE

This Access Agreement sets out the University of Portsmouth's fee levels and financial support for Home/EU full-time undergraduate students starting courses in 2012/13. Supporting information, including information about how to apply for financial support, will be available through the University's website [www.port.ac.uk](http://www.port.ac.uk)

This Access Agreement has been developed through consultation with the University's Board of Governors and a smaller Fees and Funding Working Group including Governors, senior managers and the President of the Students' Union to ensure that student views were incorporated into our proposals.

## 2. OUR COMMITMENT

Our strategic plan includes as a headline aim our ambition "to raise aspirations and promote access to the University". We aim to ensure that students who can benefit from courses at the University are not prevented from attending and continuing due to financial hardship. We recognise that students from diverse backgrounds have differing needs and endeavour to support their effective transition into University and subsequent progression to employment or further study. We aim to provide a supportive environment that helps students from all backgrounds to feel welcome and supported within the University community and to achieve their full potential.

### 3. TUITION FEES FOR NEW STUDENTS

#### 3.1 Tuition fees for Home/EU full-time undergraduate students starting courses in 2012/13

For this purpose, 'undergraduates' are students studying towards a first degree (including Foundation Degree), HE Certificate, HE Diploma, HND or equivalent.

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Tuition fee</b>	<b>Estimated 2012/13 entrants</b>	<b>Notes</b>
All undergraduate courses unless specified below	£8,500	4,760	
Franchised courses delivered by South Downs College and the Isle of Wight College	Not more than £6,000	28	1
Sandwich year out	£850	0	
Language year abroad	£850	0	2
PGCE Post-Compulsory Education	£8,500	30	
TDA funded PGCE courses	To be determined	110	3

#### **Note Issue**

- 1** Specific fees of not more than £6,000 to be determined in consultation with our FE College partners.
- 2** Fees for Language year abroad students within the Erasmus scheme will be confirmed once information is received on future funding arrangements for this scheme.
- 3** Advice on future fees and funding arrangements is awaited from the TDA.

### **3.2 Tuition fees for full-cost courses in 2012/13**

The University runs a number of full-cost full-time undergraduate courses with partners including the NHS. These courses are subject to different tuition fees and financial support arrangements and are outside the scope of this Access Agreement.

Currently, these full-cost courses are:

BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography  
BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography  
BSc (Hons) Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy  
CertHE Dental Nursing  
BA (Hons) Community Justice Studies

### **3.3 Tuition fees for 2013/14 onwards**

Tuition fees for students starting in 2012/13 will be increased for later years of their course at a rate of inflation not greater than the annual increase in the Retail Price Index, as measured at an appropriate point in the year.

## 4. STUDENTS COVERED BY THESE FEES

### 4.1 New students

These new fees will apply to all Home/EU new entrants to HEFCE supported full-time undergraduate courses in 2012/13. This will include any students who applied for entry in 2011 and chose to defer their entry to September 2012.

These fees will apply if students enter the first year of an undergraduate course or if they enter direct to Year 2 or later, unless they are transferring or progressing from another undergraduate course and are classed as continuing by the Student Loans Company (SLC).

### 4.2 Continuing students covered by existing fees

Students continuing on a full-time undergraduate course started before 1 September 2012 will pay fees at the existing subsidised rate.

Provided they are classed as 'continuing students' by the SLC, this includes:

- Students who have taken a study break;
- Full-time students who are progressing directly to end-on courses, such as Foundation Degree or HND progression to Honours degree courses, or progression to the Diploma in Architecture course. This progression arrangement includes students progressing directly from another HEI, provided they were previously full-time students and they are classed as continuing by the SLC.
- Students who transfer from another HEI, from and into a full-time undergraduate course, provided that they started their original course before 1 September 2012.

## 5. EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND RETENTION MEASURES

### 5.1 Overall level of expenditure

Widening participation to higher education has been a long held strategic commitment for the University of Portsmouth, demonstrated by our successful performance in both recruiting and retaining a diverse student body.

HESA performance indicators are a valuable source of benchmarked information on success in widening participation. The University of Portsmouth has a track record of recruiting at or above the location adjusted benchmark for the proportion of students from state schools, from social classes 4-7, and young and mature entrants from low participation neighbourhoods. We also perform well in terms of student retention, with non-continuation rates consistently better than benchmark since 2004/05.

OFFA guidance recommends that a University in our position should spend around 22.5% of fee income above £6,000 on measures to improve access and retention. Given the University of Portsmouth's strategic commitment to widening participation, we have decided to commit a higher proportion than this guideline. In 2012/13, 31.1% of our fee income above £6,000 will be spent on a range of target measures. This will reduce to 25.5% in steady state, once the Government's contribution to the National Scholarship Programme funding is fully implemented.

### 5.2 Expenditure plans

The following sections explain our planned activities and expenditure to widen participation through measures focused on recruitment and retention, including financial support to all English students from low income families.



## 6. ACCESS MEASURES

### 6.1 Range of activities

From 2012/13 onwards the University will undertake a range of activities aimed at aspiration-raising and widening access. These will build on our successful collaborative work through AimHigher. In 2012/13 our investment will include £0.88m on a range of widening participation focused outreach activities and £0.18m on summer schools, taster sessions and related activities. We plan an annual investment of £0.2m to retain the expertise of our AimHigher team in 2011/12 and onwards, following the withdrawal of HEFCE funding to support their activities.

### 6.2 Aspiration raising and attainment

This funding will support a range of aspiration-raising activities including outreach in targeted schools in our local area, summer schools and mentoring. The University of Portsmouth is situated in an area with a traditionally low continuation rate into higher education. Progression to HE is under 26% in much of our local area, with progression from some local wards as low as 16% (HEFCE Polar data). Hence, our commitment to widening participation has a strong focus on raising aspirations and awareness of higher education.

We work with local children from Primary School onwards with the aim of changing their perceptions, and their families' views, about the importance and accessibility of higher education.

At secondary level our focus is on continuing to raise aspirations, combined with collaborative work with schools, aimed at improving attainment. The proportion of 16 year olds in Portsmouth gaining 5 GCSEs has historically been low (in 2010 Portsmouth was 146<sup>th</sup> - of 150 Local Authorities – for GCSE results 5 A-C including Maths and English). By working with schools to improve this we are making progression to sixth form and on to higher education a viable option for more local children. In addition to activities provided by our Marketing department, our academic departments run a range of subject focused conferences and workshops for our target schools and colleges. As well as supporting attainment at GCSE and A level, these are designed to showcase stimulating elements of HE study and promote interest and excitement about progression opportunities.

We are conscious of the need to reach out to target communities in innovative ways. Activities include our 'Up for it' programme, including 'Up for Sport', which aims to promote awareness and interest in higher education in local schools and families with no tradition of entering HE.

Our investment in widening participation outreach activities from 2012/13 will include the following activities. Examples of activities for different target audiences are included to illustrate the breadth of our outreach provision. We have a strong focus on aspiration raising in STEM subjects, languages and the professions, with the aim of widening participation into these careers, as well as widening access to HE.

Illustration of the University's outreach provision

Purpose	Target audience	Activities	Volume of events
<b>To raise aspiration in children at Primary School</b>	Year 5 and Year 6 children in 32 schools in SE Hampshire that meet WP criteria (above the national average for free school meals, or a feeder school to a secondary WP target school)	Interactive workshop delivered in school to each year 5 class	60 sessions to 1,800 pupils
		On campus one day visit to include mini lecture, campus tour, interview a student and graduation ceremony.	16 sessions to 1,400 pupils
		Involvement in Pompey Stars, sponsored by the Football Club and City Council, delivering art workshops to 7-11 year olds.	4 workshops
		Variety of science workshops delivered through 3 day Science fair on HMS Warrior	360 pupils
		Interactive mock court room session for junior school pupils	40 pupils
<b>To raise aspiration and attainment at 11-16 schools</b>	Year 7 to 11 in 36 schools in SE Hants that meet WP criteria (above the national average for FSM and/or below the national average for attainment and/or in a low participation area – POLAR data)	Taster days on campus: 'Why HE' and subject specific days (STEM days e.g. Science, Cosmology, Maths, Forensics Technology).	1,000 pupils over a range of events
		Residential summer school providing a taste of university life to include subject workshops and social activities.	100 year 10 pupils at a 3-day event
		Parents' events delivered in School	36 events for groups of parents
		Use of student ambassadors and mentors to act as role models to inspire future students	225 pupils

Purpose	Target audience	Activities	Volume of events
<p><b>To raise aspiration and attainment at 11-16 schools</b></p> <p>..... continued</p>		<p>Presentations at school assemblies to promote HE and encourage attendance at open days, tasters etc</p> <p>FunMaths Roadshow for pupils in years 1-13 promotes problem solving approaches</p> <p>‘Translation routes into Languages’ workshops for local schools</p>	<p>36 events reaching 6,500 pupils</p> <p>320 pupils</p> <p>2 workshops</p>
<p><b>To raise aspiration and attainment post-16</b></p>	<p>Year 12 and 13 in schools and colleges that meet WP criteria (from low participation areas – POLAR data and courses with low HE progression rates e.g. vocational courses)</p>	<p>Faculty conferences in Science, Technology, Business, Creative Industries and Humanities to provide taster lectures in subject areas to aid decision making pre-UCAS applications</p> <p>Talks in school or college on topics such as: Why HE? Making HE choices, Student Life</p> <p>FE2HE Summer University run annually with the University of Southampton, including sessions in radiography, pharmacy and social work</p> <p>Taster events for our WP target schools and colleges including Sports Science, computing, games development and animation workshops, masterclasses by Cosmology researchers, entrepreneurial leadership and a ‘New creatives’ project in Art &amp; Design</p>	<p>5 events reaching 500 students</p> <p>50 sessions reaching 1,000 students</p> <p>50 students</p> <p>20 events for over 300 pupils</p>
<p><b>Widening Participation for Mature Learners</b></p>	<p>Mature Learners from the Portsmouth area</p>	<p>Taster day to allay fears about progression to HE and answer specific queries for mature students.</p> <p>Tasters and bridging units in collaboration with local FE colleges. Some specifically targeted at vocational learners, including mature students, for example in Health Science subjects.</p>	<p>1 event for 50 adults.</p> <p>See below</p>

Purpose	Target audience	Activities	Volume of events
<b>Bridging units</b>	Young and mature learners at local FE colleges, particularly those taking vocational FE qualifications	Bridging units for young and mature learners at local FE colleges, to support effective transition into HE, focused on STEM and computing. These bridging units aim to promote progression opportunities for students taking vocational courses at local FE colleges, including mature learners.  A new Geology/Geography bridging unit starts in 2011/12.	Four events for 160 pupils

### 6.3 Curriculum and staff development

We have found that building strong academic and subject-specific links with key schools is an important way of breaking down perceived barriers and promoting accessibility of the University, as well as supporting pupil attainment. Hence, we focus on offering professional development opportunities to staff in order to ensure a smooth transition for students into the University. This includes training for staff in schools and colleges which has the benefit of increasing the reputation of, and their knowledge of, the University. In addition we will continue to provide training for University staff, particularly those involved in admissions, on changes to the curriculum or organisation of schools and colleges.

Currently planned activities include INSET for post-16 school and college staff on 2012 changes to fees and funding; helping staff involved in advising applicants writing a personal statement; advice for staff writing UCAS references; subject-specific INSET, eg sport science or input in higher education conferences; and the Information Day for careers advisers.

### 6.4 Working collaboratively for impact

We will continue to work collaboratively with other Universities in our AimHigher partnership to obtain maximum impact from our combined activities, through co-operation and appropriate targeting of schools and colleges and shared resources. Collaborative activity will include joint ambassador training, partnership work with care leavers and sharing of appropriate data to enable close targeting and monitoring of outcomes. Our current AimHigher partners are the Universities of Southampton, Southampton Solent and Winchester.

We also work with the Smallpeice Trust and deliver four STEM focused 4 day residential courses each year for year 9 and 10 pupils. In 2010 this included an Engineering Experience course particularly targeted at WP applicants and females.

## 6.5 Financial advice for potential applicants

The University of Portsmouth is a leader in the sector in terms of the support we offer to prospective applicants, their parents and carers, and to our undergraduates. We will continue to provide comprehensive and accessible advice to potential applicants, ranging from guidance on their financial entitlements to an interactive, online budget-planning tool. We will also provide tailored advice and one-to-one sessions for priority groups, including mature students, care leavers and students with disabilities.

The Student Finance Centre has a team of nine dedicated staff, including a full time Student Finance Information Officer whose role is focused on developing the outreach work the centre undertakes and working collaboratively with our Marketing team in building relationships with our local schools, colleges and sixth forms.

Providing clear, tailored financial advice will be a particular focus for our activity for 2012 entry, to ensure applicants and their families make informed decisions, and are not deterred from entering higher education due to lack of information or misinformation.

Specially targeted events for local schools and colleges will include briefings for parents in low income families, to ensure they understand the costs and benefits of higher education and the financial packages available to their children.

The University has a dedicated phone line, staffed by specialist advice staff, for fee and bursary queries from applicants. Additional online resources will also be developed, to provide flexible access to information by prospective applicants.

Typical activities providing financial advice for potential applicants & advisors

Target audience	Activity	Purpose of event	Volume of events
<b>Prospective applicants and their parents</b>	College/sixth form briefings	To advise A1 and A2 students of the support available to them when entering HE and how to apply.	55 events
	Preview Days	Presentations and information stands. To be delivered to visiting A2 students to outline the financial support available to them when entering HE and how to apply.	13 events
	Departmental Open Days	Presentations and information stands. Financial advice to be provided to visiting A2 students, to outline the support available to them when entering HE and how to apply.	24 events

Target audience	Activity	Purpose of event	Volume of events
<b>Prospective students and their parents</b>  ..... continued	Practical guidance on student support applications process	Workshops to be delivered in local colleges and sixth forms to assist A2 students with their applications for student support.	21 events
<b>Parents</b>	Presentations and information stands	To advise the parents of A2 students of the support available to their children from 2012 and how to apply. To include advice about supporting their children with financial awareness and budget planning.	19 events
<b>School age children</b>	Summer schools and schools liaison events	Workshops delivering the interactive 'Budget Game' and 'Poundstretchers' sessions to help develop financial capability, reduce financial concerns and raise aspirations for University.	6 events
<b>Advisers and external staff</b>	INSET sessions for teachers and FE lecturers	Presentations to College and sixth form teachers entitled 'Is HE worth it?' with the aim of explaining the changes to the funding system in 2012.	12 events
	Conferences/briefings	Presentations outlining the funding system in 2011/12 and the changes in 2012/13 delivered to staff from a variety of external agencies, eg Careers Advisers.	5 events

We are planning to extend our proactive financial advice in 2011/12, focusing to 2012 applicants, to ensure that the key positive messages relating to the changes in 2012 are communicated to prospective students and their parents, to allow them to make informed decisions about their future. All University staff involved in undergraduate admissions will be briefed on key messages about funding available and repayment arrangements, to ensure that applicants receive consistent information regardless of their point of contact with the University.

Initiatives currently under development include:

- Fees and Funding 2012 – supplement to the prospectus developed in collaboration with Marketing, to provide a user friendly guide (currently available).
- Funding at your fingertips 2012/13 – concertina card style resources developed to explain the funding in clear and simple terms (currently available).
- FAQ video for the University website – an information resource featuring real questions asked by real students and parents to address the key concerns being raised about the funding in 2012.
- INSET sessions – developed to ensure college and sixth form teachers are aware of the funding, thus enabling them to provide accurate information to their students (currently delivered).
- Parents and students Q&A sessions – offering an opportunity for parents of A1 and A2 students to ask questions and raise any concerns over 2012 funding through local colleges, sixth forms and schools.
- Staff training – offering training sessions for all University staff involved with admissions on the changes in 2012 and how to address common concerns and share positive messages.
- Events targeting under-represented groups – offer funding information sessions to Portsmouth Foyer residents, care leavers, social workers, foster parents and staff in the local Benefit agencies.

The Student Finance team are also investigating new initiatives to provide information advice and guidance (IAG) to prospective students:

<b>Portsmouth specific application guide</b>	This interactive web guide will take students through the details of the Student Finance England application process and will hold information specific to Portsmouth with links to the other relevant websites. It will also deliver "pop-up" messages and useful information at key points in the process (e.g. Bursary/NSP information, application deadlines etc). This will be complementary to our existing online application sessions.
<b>Repayments Guide</b>	This online tool will be developed to provide real life examples of student loan repayments and links to salaries. This will help prospective students to understand how the repayment system works, what it means in real financial terms to them as individuals and move focus away from the outstanding debt.
<b>Myth &amp; Jargon Buster</b>	This addition to our website will help to clarify some of the mixed messages and unclear information which circulates about student funding. It will be compiled from real examples (e.g. news reports, questions from students and parents).
<b>Benefits questionnaire</b>	Students from non-traditional backgrounds are often not aware of the funding available to them and do not always know who to approach for help. We currently offer personalised benefit predictions for applicants who are lone parents, who often have concerns about their income. We will offer this service remotely through a short online questionnaire which is submitted to our financial adviser. Information will be returned to the student with details of the further support available.
<b>Parents/students focus group</b>	By approaching the parents of prospective students from local schools and colleges we will gather information about their information needs and how they would prefer to access IAG. Based on this feedback we will explore alternative communication methods including social media.

By building on the existing successful work of our Student Finance Centre, and introducing this range of new initiatives, we aim to overcome concerns about changes in fees from 2012, and ensure that the University is strongly placed to meet our recruitment targets for young and mature students from low participation neighbourhoods.

## **6.6 Admissions arrangements**

The University's Admissions Policy<sup>1</sup> values and seeks diversity in the student community. We endeavour to ensure that all of our students are given the opportunity to achieve their potential in relevant subjects at appropriate levels. In accordance with this objective, the University is committed to recognising the academic and other relevant achievements of each applicant. We welcome applications from motivated candidates from all backgrounds and recognise that student potential is not always identified from formal academic qualifications.

In accordance with this policy, the University is committed to using contextual data on applicants in line with good practice highlighted by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions programme. Our admissions arrangements aim to identify students with the potential to benefit from our courses. As a matter of course we accept students with diverse entry qualifications, including use of APEL for mature students where appropriate.

We will continue to actively use contextual data for several purposes. Firstly, to ensure that widening participation applicants receive appropriate consideration, taking account of their circumstances. Secondly, to make appropriate offers for individual applicants, within the defined range for each course. Contextual information used for this purpose will include applicant-specific information and data about average achievement rates in applicants' schools and colleges. Thirdly, to ensure that we offer additional support for students where appropriate. For example we offer an appointment with a Disability Officer to applicants with a disability. We aim to identify each student's particular needs and ensure that these are effectively and rapidly communicated to all those academic and support staff who are responsible for delivering the necessary support and/or making necessary adjustments to the teaching, learning and assessment process.

## **6.7 Fee reductions and bursaries**

We recognise the benefits of fee discounts in promoting access, while bursaries are particularly helpful in supporting retention of students from low income families. Our generous plans for targeted fee discounts and bursaries are detailed in the section below on financial support for students.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/academicregistry/filetodownload,14404,en.pdf>



## **6.8 Accessibility of professional courses**

The Milburn report on Fair Access to the Professions highlighted the importance of access to the professions to promote social mobility. We have analysed the background of entrants to the professional courses run at Portsmouth (focusing on engineering, accountancy, law, architecture and pharmacy)<sup>2</sup>. We found little difference in the representation of students from low participation neighbourhoods on these professional courses compared to the average across all other full-time undergraduate courses. We will ensure that our combination of aspiration-raising work and sensitive admissions arrangements will continue to support access to the professions.

## **6.9 Flexible provision**

The University already provides a variety of routes into and through higher education, to provide opportunities in addition to traditional three year degree courses. For example we run full-time and part-time Foundation Degrees, with honours degree top-ups. We also provide a range of part-time and distance learning courses.

We are considering the possibility of introducing accelerated honours degree programmes, initially in our Business School. These will not be available for 2012/13 entry, but demonstrate our willingness to provide flexible routes that help students minimise debt while achieving their educational ambitions.

We are also investigating potential demand for an extension of our part-time provision, enabling students to combine work and study. We anticipate that the availability of tuition fee loans for part-time students will make such flexible routes more appealing to potential students. The University has set part-time undergraduate tuition fees for 2012/13, pro rata according to credit studied, to an FTE fee of not more than £6,000, to minimise the impact of fee increases on part-time students, to recognise the different demands that they make on the University and in recognition of the fact that many such students come from under-represented groups.

## **6.10 Milestones and targets**

Table 5b of Annex B to this Access Agreement includes a range of measures for impact of this aspiration raising work, primarily in terms of numbers of participants. The eventual impact of this work on widening participation will be measured through our achievement of targets for recruitment of students from low participation neighbourhoods, included in Table 5a. We are currently reviewing the schools and colleges we work with, to ensure our activities are strongly focused on pupils drawn from these low participation neighbourhoods.

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<sup>2</sup> This analysis showed that the proportion of students from low participation wards (quintile 1 in HEFCE's POLAR2 classification) on our professional courses was 7.9% compared with 8.8% of our students overall being from quintile 1. We will continue to monitor this.

## 7. RETENTION MEASURES

### 7.1 Promoting retention of vulnerable students

The University's retention figures are currently healthy, with better than average non-continuation rates<sup>3</sup> since 2004/05. Widening participation students may find it more difficult to complete their courses due to financial pressures. While the new funding arrangements from 2012 include maintenance grants for students from low income families, these students will still face financial challenges compared to students from wealthier families.

We intend to reduce the risk that such challenges will lead to withdrawal by offering a combination of fee discounts and bursaries to students from lower income families. In developing these plans, the University has taken advice from our Students' Union and from our Student Finance Centre. Our plans offer an affordable, targeted approach, which will work effectively alongside the Government's National Scholarship Programme. Details are included in the section on financial support for students.

### 7.2 Financial support to promote retention

In addition to fee discounts and bursaries, the University has also established a £0.5m p.a. hardship fund, which will be maintained through this Access Agreement. This hardship fund provides flexible support, aimed at low income students in greatest need, for example mature students who are single parents. Feedback from individual students and from the Students' Union highlights the importance of these funds in helping students complete their courses successfully.

In addition to direct financial support, we work actively with undergraduates to reduce withdrawal for financial reasons. For example we run a 'money week' each year in collaboration with the Students' Union. A variety of sessions from financial planning to cheap and healthy cooking classes aim to promote student retention and also help students minimize their debt, which is particularly important for students from low income families.

### 7.3 Academic support

The University's relative success to date in recruiting students from widening participation backgrounds means that it is essential that we offer a comprehensive range of student support services, aimed at continuing to increase academic success rates and progression to employment.

Our students enter higher education with a diverse range of backgrounds and entry qualifications. Services such as the Academic Skills Unit, Maths Café, Disability Advice Centre, Counselling Service, Chaplaincy and Student Finance Centre work with our academic departments, to ensure that students have a positive experience of higher education which meets their particular needs. HEFCE widening participation funding contributes to supporting these services.

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<sup>3</sup> HESA performance indicators Table 3a

The University's current Access Agreement includes £0.6m expenditure per annum for post-entry support, including academic skills and a further £0.7m per annum on financial guidance and related administration.

We plan to make additional investments in promoting a high quality student experience, addressing the needs of students from diverse widening participation backgrounds. These investments include fifteen additional posts in faculties to provide support for learning, additional funding for mental health advice and additional funding for our employability service. Table 3 of Annex B to this Access Agreement includes a contribution of £108,000 in 2012/13, rising to £257,000 by 2015/16 to the total cost of these posts, recognising that they will offer support to the wider student body as well as widening participation students.

## 8. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS INCLUDING THE NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

### 8.1 National Scholarship Programme (NSP)

For 2012/13, the University has been allocated 236 national scholarships, with funding of £708,000. The University has decided to meet the requirement to provide matched funding by doubling the number of scholarships available in 2012/13, offering 472 national scholarships at a value of £3,000 each. Students funded through the National Scholarship funds will be eligible for awards in year 1 of their course, and subsequent years, as follows:

'Eligible students' are defined as English and EU students paying their own fees of £8,500 in 2012/13, on HEFCE supported undergraduate courses and meeting the family income criteria below.

#### 8.1.1 English students

Eligible students who are ordinarily resident in England will receive the following awards.

Residual family income	Award in year 1	Award in later years
£25,000 or less	£2,000 fee discount £1,000 bursary	£1,000 bursary

#### 8.1.2 EU students

Eligible students who are EU nationals will receive the following awards, based on HEFCE advice that the maintenance element of an NSP award will not be available to these students.

Residual family income	Award in year 1	Award in later years
£25,000 or less *	£2,000 fee discount	Nil

\* Residual family income limits will vary by country, based on differences in living costs as calculated by the SLC.

- £15,000 limit for Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland & Romania.
- £20,000 limit for Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia & Slovenia
- £25,000 limit for all other EU countries.

#### 8.1.3 Students from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

NSP awards will not be available to students who are ordinarily resident in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

#### **8.1.4 Number of awards**

In addition to providing the required matched funding for the NSP programme, the University of Portsmouth will operate a more generous fee discount and bursary scheme, as detailed below. For this reason we have not set any additional criteria to ration NSP places. The University will guarantee to fund fee discounts and bursaries at the defined levels for all eligible students, in addition to the 472 national scholarships.

### **8.2 Additional University financial support to promote recruitment and retention**

The University of Portsmouth currently has around 1,500 first year students with residual family incomes of £25,000 or less<sup>4</sup>. Less than one third of this number would be eligible for a national scholarship in 2012/13, due to the number of places allocated to Portsmouth, and our decision to match fund by doubling the number.

Consequently, we have decided to invest substantially in additional University bursaries and fee waivers, to enable us to offer the same level of financial support to all eligible students with a family income of £25,000 or less.

We have made this decision for two reasons;

- students from low income families are core business at the University of Portsmouth and we need to help ensure that the new fees regime does not deter them from entering higher education;
- this decision will provide a very positive marketing message and will help prospective applicants understand the financial support available from the University of Portsmouth without concerns about restricted access to limited National Scholarship places in 2012/13.

Importantly, this decision means we can support all students from low income families, rather than devising potentially arbitrary criteria to distinguish between them.

In order to promote both recruitment and retention of students from low income families, the University has decided that all eligible students whose residual assessed family incomes are £25,000 or less will receive a bursary of £1,000 in each year of their studies and a fee discount of £2,000 in their first year only. There will also be bursaries available each year of their studies to students with family incomes of between £25,000 to £42,600. This means that approximately 1,500 first year students will pay the lower fee, and around 6,000 students will receive a bursary once the new system is fully in place (43% of full-time Home/EU undergraduates).

This additional investment in financial support means that all eligible students will receive the same package of financial support, regardless of whether this is funded through the National Scholarship Programme or by the University. Student access to financial support at Portsmouth will be means tested, but will not be subject to any other rationing based on subject of study or academic success.

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<sup>4</sup> All references to family income refer to residual family income as assessed by the Student Loans Company.

### 8.3 Eligibility for our awards package

The University is committed to widening participation and to ensuring that we minimize the impact of the introduction of higher fees from 2012 on recruitment and retention of students from low income families. Therefore, we have decided that:

- All 'eligible students' on full-time undergraduate courses with fees of £8,500 will receive a bursary and/or fee waiver. The University will substantially add to the Government's NSP funding to deliver this commitment in 2012/13.
- 'Eligible students' are defined as English and EU students paying their own fees of £8,500 in 2012/13, on HEFCE supported undergraduate courses and meeting the family income criteria below.
- In consultation with our FE partners we have set lower fees of no more than £6,000 for our full-time franchised courses. The fee for our on-campus and franchised part-time undergraduate courses will be no more than £6,000 pro rata to credit studied. As these fees are substantially lower than fees for Portsmouth based full-time undergraduate courses, these students will not be entitled to further fee reductions or bursaries.
- Students paying substantially lower fees for a language year abroad or sandwich year out will also be ineligible for fee waivers or bursaries for that year of study.
- Students whose fees are paid or part paid through a sponsorship arrangement are also ineligible.

### 8.4 Income levels and awards in 2012/13

Based on HEFCE advice the University will make appropriate awards for students from different nations in the EU. These awards will be applied equally to students funded through the National Scholarship Programme or through additional University investment in fee discounts and bursaries. In the interest of equity, we will operate an identical assessment and support process for students, regardless of the source of their financial support. Consequently, the tables below incorporate NSP funded support and additional University funded support which will provide a sliding scale of support to students from a range of low family incomes.

#### 8.4.1 English students

Eligible students who are ordinarily resident in England will receive the following awards

<b>Residual family income</b>	<b>Award in year 1</b>	<b>Award in later years</b>
£25,000 or less	£2,000 fee discount £1,000 bursary	£1,000 bursary
£25,001 to £32,000	£1,000 bursary	£1,000 bursary
£32,001 to £42,600	£500 bursary	£500 bursary

#### 8.4.2 EU students

Eligible students who are EU nationals will receive the following awards, based on HEFCE advice that the maintenance element of an NSP award will not be available to these students.

Residual family income	Award in year 1	Award in later years
£25,000 or less *	£2,000 fee discount	Nil

\* Residual family income limits will vary by country, based on differences in living costs as calculated by the SLC.

- £15,000 limit for Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland & Romania.
- £20,000 limit for Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia & Slovenia
- £25,000 limit for all other EU countries.

#### 8.4.3 Students from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

At this stage we do not anticipate offering any fee discounts or bursaries to students from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This position will be confirmed once information is available on support arrangements for those students from their devolved administrations.

#### 8.5 Income levels and awards in 2013/14 onwards

Bursary levels, fee discounts and income levels for eligibility will be amended in future in line with the National Scholarship Programme. Such changes may apply only to new entrants from 2013/14 onwards.

#### 8.6 Additional support for priority groups

Recognising the particular challenges facing students from low income families, the University will invest in two additional types of financial support to contribute to student retention.

##### 8.6.1 Additional support for priority groups

The University currently has a hardship fund of £0.5m per annum, of which 97% is used to provide vital support to students with family incomes of up to £42,600. Advice from our Students' Union and our Student Finance Centre has confirmed the value of this hardship fund in supporting students on a needs-assessed basis. Therefore this hardship fund will be continued, with targeted allocations to minimise withdrawal of lower income students due to financial pressures.

### **8.6.2 Care leavers**

We will offer an additional annual bursary of £1,500 for UK full-time undergraduate students who are/have been looked after by any local authority or foster carer or who are currently living in sheltered accommodation or a Foyer Federation. This bursary will not be means-tested and is in addition to any other entitlement. These students also have a Personal Finance Adviser to provide tailored information and guidance about available funding and help with financial planning. The University has already aided about forty care leavers in this way, and is committed to continuing to support this small group of students who face particular challenges in entering higher education.



## 9 TARGETS AND MILESTONES

### 9.1 HESA performance indicators

The University is keen to set targets that can be monitored over time and for which benchmarking information is available to enable evaluation of our performance in context. For this reason in Table 5a of Annex B to this Access Agreement we have set targets related to HESA performance indicators in the following areas, focusing on successful recruitment and retention of key widening participation groups. We have included targets on retention, although our performance is already better than benchmark. This is due to concerns that widening participation students may be more likely than other students to withdraw in their first year of study. So we will keep this performance indicator under close scrutiny.

We have focused on recruitment and retention of students from low participation neighbourhoods after taking advice from UCAS and HESA about the reliability of data on different indicators of widening participation. The use of low participation neighbourhoods presents particular advantages, as these neighbourhoods are defined by HEFCE using postcodes and the POLAR2 analysis. In contrast socio-economic class is a self-reported field by applicants, which leads to unreliable and incomplete data.

This focus on low participation neighbourhoods is helpful, as we will ensure that our outreach activities are focused on schools, colleges and other organisations with catchment areas including these priority neighbourhoods.

<b>Performance indicator</b>	<b>Our targets</b>
% of young full-time undergraduate entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2) (HESA Table t1b)	For both these indicators we currently recruit at location-adjusted benchmark for this indicator. We aim to progressively improve our performance compared to benchmark over the next five years through activities including aspiration raising work, sensitive use of contextual data and generous fee discounts and bursaries.
% of mature full-time undergraduate entrants with no previous HE & from low participation neighbourhood (POLAR2) (HESA Table t2a)	
% non-continuation following year of entry: young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2) (HESA Table t3b)	Our non-completion rates are currently 0.5% better than benchmark. Through support and bursaries for students from low income families, we aim to further reduce non-completions for this group of students.
% non-continuation following year of entry: mature full-time first degree entrants with no previous HE (HESA Table t3c)	Our non-completion rate is currently 2.8% better than benchmark. Through support and bursaries, we aim to further reduce non-completions for this group of students.

## **9.2 Other milestones and targets**

Table 5b of Annex B includes targets related to our outreach activity. The resulting impact and outcome of these activities will be monitored through our achievement of headline strategic targets in Table 5a.

## **9.3 Developing additional internal indicators**

While HESA performance indicators have advantages in terms of benchmarking performance and consistency over time, they also have disadvantages due to the delay in publishing data. Therefore the University will develop internal 'lead' indicators, to supplement the HESA 'lag' indicators.

After evaluating the data available at application and enrolment, we have decided to focus on setting targets to increase the proportion of students from low participation neighbourhoods, focusing on quintile 1 defined in HEFCE's POLAR2 data. Classification by low participation neighbourhood can also be carried out through the UCAS applications process, enabling target setting and monitoring for admissions as well as for enrolments, completions and success rates.

We are in the process of setting up appropriate monitoring systems. These will be implemented for 2012/13 entry onwards, enabling us to set faculty and departmental improvement targets to underpin the targets in this Access Agreement.

# 10 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

## **10.1 Arrangements and timescales**

The University will monitor implementation of this Access Agreement in accordance with OFFA guidelines and associated HEFCE guidelines for the operation of the National Scholarship Programme.

We will undertake timely monitoring of expenditure and recruitment of widening participation students to evaluate the success of our Access Agreement and our overall commitment to widening participation in higher education.

Given the strategic importance of widening participation to the University of Portsmouth, monitoring data and trends will be regularly considered by our senior management team and Board of Governors, in addition to meeting external monitoring requirements. The President of the Students' Union is a member of the Board of Governors and will contribute to Governors' review of our performance in delivering our Access Agreement and associated targets.