

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Access Agreement presented to the Office for Fair Access

Revised for 2010/11 entry

1. Widening Participation Strategy

The University of Warwick was among the first of the research-intensive universities to give priority to widening participation and life-long learning and it believes that accessibility remains critical to its developing mission. The University has recently launched an ambitious new Strategy, which intends to locate it in the world's top 50 universities by 2015. Sustaining an exceptional student experience is a core dimension of the Strategy and the University is aiming to build on a distinctive model of education that has served generations of learners from all socio-economic backgrounds well. The Strategy includes an explicit objective to "enhance the University's reputation for supporting the participation of all who, regardless of background, prior attainment, age or nationality, have the ability to benefit from its educational opportunities". This Access Agreement is designed to support that strategic objective.

2. Level of fees for full time Home/EU students

The University will charge the maximum fee per annum, as determined by the Government on an annual basis, to Home/EU students for all full-time PGCE and undergraduate courses except 2 + 2 courses. The fee levels for 2+2 courses may be reviewed in the future and increased should other funding sources for the courses be subject to change.

3. Additional fee income to be spent on financial assistance

The University is seeking to ensure that, wherever possible, financial barriers to taking up the opportunity to come to Warwick are overcome by offering a substantial package of financial assistance to our students at the point of entry and throughout their academic careers.

As in previous years, the University is committing 25% of its additional income accruing from variable fees each year to fund the Warwick Undergraduate Aid Programme (WUAP). WUAP is intended to offer significant financial support to potential students to ensure that they have adequate funding in place, in conjunction with financial support offered by the government, to address the expected average costs of attending University each year.

The WUAP scheme has proved very successful over its lifetime and the University is now experiencing higher take up rates than originally anticipated for the scheme. In light of this WUAP will provide the following maintenance bursary support for students from 2010/11 entry onwards:

- A minimum maintenance bursary award of £1,500 per annum to all full-time home undergraduate students studying for their first degree whose family income is less than £36,000 per annum.
- A limited number of philanthropic awards worth up to £2,000 per annum will also be available to those full-time home undergraduate students entering the University for the first time in 2010/11 who are in receipt of government maintenance grant

support. The number of philanthropic awards will vary on an annual basis and may have additional eligibility criteria beyond financial hardship.

- The minimum statutory maintenance bursary of £329 to all home PGCE students on a one year programme who are in receipt of the full government maintenance grant support for the year.

No other eligibility criteria will be applied beyond securing and retaining a place at the University. Funding via WUAP will be available for each year of a student's course as long as they continue to meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

Support via WUAP will be paid to students directly via BACS as maintenance support on a termly basis (with the exception of the minimum statutory bursary paid to PGCE students which will be paid in full in January each year).

Awards provided from external philanthropic donations to the University are not included in the 25% commitment of additional fee income.

4. Widening Participation at Warwick: Raising aspirations, awareness and attainment

The University has an established track-record in terms of outreach work and works closely with local partners. Through this Access Agreement, it will embed and enhance its outreach work, focusing on increasing the range and effectiveness of interventions. Enhanced targeting and evaluation will underpin this approach. Greater emphasis will be placed on sustained interventions that intend to raise attainment and increase the likelihood of successful applications to universities with the most exacting entry standards, including Warwick. Stronger links will be built with schools in the wider region to supplement established local links.

The University has increasingly sought external sponsors for its outreach activity and presently has two successful programmes operating in this way, including one working with disadvantaged students within the Gifted and Talented cohort. External funding opportunities will continue to be sought to complement publicly-funded and fee-income funded activities and the University will exploit synergies and best practice across these different programmes.

The University intends to allocate a lump sum of £500,000 per annum, rising in line with inflation, to support its widening participation aspirations. This will be used to underpin the undergraduate admissions strategy; provide information, advice and guidance (especially financial) to applicants and their advisors; and support events and activities across the school life cycle.

A summary of current outreach work is provided in Appendix 1.

5. Provision of information, advice and guidance

The provision of clear and accessible information, advice and guidance is a key component of the University's approach to outreach. The University will ensure that information regarding fee levels and funding is available to applicants at the earliest stage possible. Fee levels will be printed in our prospectus, in our online prospective applicant web pages and in offer letters. Additionally, course fees information will be available via UCAS course search and this information will be highlighted in workshops and open days.

We aim to enhance our WP web presence and through this provide additional guidance on financial aid packages. Information will also be provided on aspiration and attainment activities and admissions-specific advice. Information sessions relating to the application process will be augmented and priority will be given to those candidates who have little or no tradition of Higher Education in their families or who are from under-represented groups.

The University will maintain the additional support it has located in the Student Finance Team in order to provide individual assistance to prospective and current students and their families.

6. Summary of milestones

The University will regularly review progress towards its widening participation aims and objectives. Ongoing monitoring will address the University's impact on raising the aspirations and attainment of young people and adults; increasing diversity in the student population; and ensuring that students are provided with appropriate support and development to aid retention. The University has established the following specific milestones as representative of our commitment to widening participation, and in particular to those groups identified as under-represented at Warwick:

- (a) Raise the numbers of full-time young entrants to the University from the lowest socio-economic groups through to 2010/11 in order to reach our location-adjusted benchmark by 2008/09 and our standard benchmark by 2009/10, assuming no significant growth in home undergraduate full-time numbers at the University;
- (b) Raise the numbers of full-time young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods to the location-adjusted benchmark by 2008/09 and the standard benchmark by 2010/11;
- (c) Increase the numbers of full-time undergraduate entrants (both young and mature combined) from ethnic groups currently under-represented at Warwick including Black Caribbean, Black African, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi by 0.5% for the first three categories and 0.2% for the last by 2009/10.

These increases are benchmarked against 2004 entry data as follows:

Under-represented ethnic groups at Warwick based on entrants for 2004	Milestone by 2009/10
Black African: 1.2% at Warwick, 2.3% UCAS national data	1.7%
Black Caribbean: 0.3% at Warwick, 1.1% UCAS national data	0.8%
Pakistani: 0.6% at Warwick vs. 2.6% UCAS national data	1.1%
Bangladeshi: 0.4% at Warwick, 0.8% UCAS national data	0.6%

- (d) Increase over the period of the Access Agreement the total number of mature Home/EU learners registered on full-time and part-time routes combined;

- (e) Increase the proportion of entrants to Warwick from those candidates with category 2, 3 and 4 disabilities (blind/partially sighted, deaf/hearing difficulty, wheelchair/mobility difficulty) by 100 per cent by 2009/10 (using 2004 entry of 10 as the benchmark).

7. Monitoring arrangements

The University's Access Agreement, along with supporting strategies and policies, will be reviewed regularly and at least on an annual basis by the Senate Steering Committee, prior to consideration by the Senate and the Council. At an operational level, the delivery of the University's widening participation activity and progress towards the specific milestones included in the Access Agreement will be monitored by the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation and the Centre for Lifelong Learning in conjunction with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning and International Affairs). Extensive review of admissions, in-take and retention data is integrated within the University's quality assurance and equal opportunities frameworks.

APPENDIX 1: CURRENT OUTREACH WORK

HEFCE/ESF Summer School – full week residential aimed at 50 year 11 pupils from across the West Midlands, partially funded by HEFCE/ESF, offering participants opportunities to learn from current academics, live in halls, grow in confidence and receive focused advice on how to turn their aspirations into a University education. The University will consider maintaining the Summer School if no external support is available.

Subject-specific activities. The University provides on-campus and in-school taster sessions, master classes, workshops and conferences in specific subject areas, designed to raise aspirations and attainment, including Mathematics, Sciences and Modern Foreign Languages.

Aiming for a College Education (ACE Days). These aim to introduce pupils to higher education and the different types of courses available, before GCSE options are taken. Through group work, discussions and academic sessions, the course challenges misconceptions and myths pupils may hold about higher education, university and university students. ACE days are among the most popular of the University's outreach activities and have recently been extended.

Year 7-11 in school activities. The University works closely with pupils across the student life cycle and at critical junctures to demystify higher education and develop and sustain a motivation to enter higher education. For example, Year 10 visits are designed to challenge the “It's too late for me to bother trying now” perception many GCSE students may hold by identifying the skills that they have – often inadvertently – been developing and how they can best present these to Universities. In-school activities will be extended under the Access Agreement.

Sixth Form conference and workshops. The University supports sixth form development plans within local schools and colleges by providing presentations and sessions on application cycles, personal statements, funding and finance, and other aspects of accessing HE to eliminate uncertainty surrounding the application process, increase students' confidence to submit an application, and help them understand how to make the system work for them. Conferences combine a subject focus for each of Warwick's faculties with development work along the lines above.

Family Awareness Days are designed to help learners feel more comfortable with the campus environment, and include a campus tour, confidence-building activities and the chance to meet current students for the pupils, while parents discuss the myths and realities of higher education.

Warwick Volunteers. The University has an active and vibrant volunteering programme. A key element is school-based work, helping to support and nurture pupils across a range of age groups through classroom participation, student ambassador schemes and mentoring programmes.

Primary School Engagement. The University will operate under license from the National Primary Network to engage up to 300 students from 10 local primary schools, introducing higher education in a fun way at an early stage to encourage motivation right from the start of the pupils' secondary school careers.

GOAL – supports cohorts of 200-250 disadvantaged students per year from within the Gifted and Talented cohort across a four year programme of bespoke activities and free access to the wider YG&T provision.

Pathways to Law – supports 50 students per year from non-professional backgrounds in the Midlands across a three year programme designed to raise attainment and increase the prospects of accessing a leading Law School and the legal profession.