

Plumpton College: Access Agreement 2012 - 2013

Pre amble

Higher Education provision at Plumpton College is currently indirectly funded through the University of Brighton. This access agreement is in support of a bid to HEFCE (11 November 2011) for the award of a contract to deliver HE provision funded directly to Plumpton College of 223 Student Control Numbers in 2012-2013.

Background

Plumpton College is a specialist land-based college which offers both Further and Higher Education. HE courses are currently funded indirectly and validated through the University of Brighton. All courses (Foundation Diplomas, Foundation Degrees (Arts and Science) and BScs are delivered at Plumpton College and all provision is within the land-based specialist footprint, with 85% within Band B. The specialist nature of provision means that students attending the College originate from all over the UK.

The College is proud of its HE provision which completes and enhances a learning continuum starting with courses for primary and secondary schoolchildren, through 16-18 full time courses and adult courses at full levels 2 and 3 and leads from HE onto significant full cost technical updating for employees and employers. This learning continuum is a central characteristic of the Colleges significant track record in widening participation, especially at HE level. Progression from Plumpton vocational FE courses to Foundation Degrees is as high as 25% for some Plumpton courses, this non-traditional route has enabled students from low participation schools and neighbourhoods to access our Higher Education provision supported considerably by the additional mentoring and support available. Students from all educational backgrounds and establishments are equally represented, supported and encouraged to ensure inclusion, progress and achievement despite specific barriers such as disability, leaving care and ethnicity. The College's active participation in *Aim Higher* has supported this. Currently approximately 15% of all new HE students come from disadvantaged localities (this rises by nearly 2% when excluding all wine courses); this figure is comparable with those attained for level 3 FE courses, but although the College believes this level is above average, it is keen to extend its marketing and outreach activities to ensure a wider range of students are aware of and can access its HE provision.

The College monitors closely the data surrounding the ethnic background of its students, and although the intake for both Further Education and Higher Education courses at least reflects the diversity of its locality and the nature of its provision, it has considerably extended its marketing and outreach activities to include a wider pool of students; historically due to the rural nature of the industry as well as the location of landbased colleges, the sector has tended to attract a low proportion of BME students. However the College recruiting activity now include areas of London and this focus is beginning to increase the ethnic diversity of students. *Aim Higher* again has been used to support these activities.

Fees for 2012-2013 cohort

In considering the fee level for full time undergraduate (FDS and BSc) courses for 2012-2013, the College has taken into consideration:

- ♦ its funding position
- ♦ the costs of delivery for its full range of courses
- ♦ its high level of student demand
- ♦ the quality of the student experience, and

- ♦ consideration of the uncertainties around any future public funding for high cost provision (Band B), of which there is a significant element in the College (85%).

This fee and access agreement sets out our intention to deliver education of the highest possible quality but within a competitive economic environment. We will ensure that courses are accessible to students through a comprehensive range of financial and learning support measures which begins in schools and extends to assisting our graduates into their chosen professional careers.

Funding of student places direct to the College will allow the College to maintain the commitment made originally by our partner HEI (University of Brighton) to offer a significant number of innovative foundation and degree courses via its partner colleges, available at a range of fees. This innovation has been placed at significant risk through government withdrawal of funding to HEIs. This access agreement in conjunction with a bid to HEFCE for direct funding of student places at Plumpton Colleges, allows the College to maintain this commitment to flexible provision, widening participation and cost effective HE.

Students will not, for the duration of their course, be subject to any increase in the fee beyond that indicated in this Access Agreement and notified to them before they commit themselves to a course at Plumpton College.

Fees and fee income above £6,000

We propose to charge the following fees:

- ♦ BSc Viticulture & Oenology - £7,450
- ♦ Foundation Degree Wine Production/Wine Business - £7,450
- ♦ All other Foundation Degree and other regulated undergraduate provision - £6,900

We estimate our average full time fee, based on the numbers of first year full time student places at each of the two levels above, to be £7,032 from 2012-2013, through to 2015-2016. The average fee adjusted for fee waivers should be £6,861 in 2012-2013, falling to £6,707 in 2015-2016.

We intend to charge part time students on a pro rata basis and to charge any permitted real term rises in the fee for 2013 - 2014 onwards. Students who commence their studies in 2012 who later take a sandwich year out will be charged £750.

Expenditure on additional access measures

The College has a long standing and well-evidenced commitment to widening participation and fair access. For example, over 60% [extrapolated data from sample return size to reflect total cohort size] of our HE students enter through 'non traditional' routes.

We intend both to sustain our performance of widening participation, especially for career changing individuals moving from established but now unsuitable jobs, to more challenging and rewarding jobs in the rural environment and economy (food production, leisure and tourism, countryside management).

To this end, we propose to allocate 55% of our additional fee income above £6,000 on measures to support access and retention, especially access for those on very low wages, typical of rural industries.

This amounts to an estimated annual total of **£45,275 in 2012-2013** and together with the estimated (anticipated). This comprises:

1. Additional funding for retention support in years 2 and 3 (vice NSP	= £24,000
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funding assumed for 2012-2013 but now known as not available)	
2.Additional student support measures (years 1, 2 and 3)	= £21,275
Total	= £45,275

The additional resource available from this access agreement will enable the College's wide ranging outreach programme to develop and diversify across the following activities which will include staff presentations / promotions / preparatory interviews / presentations at schools / awareness raising of land based HE for school teachers and careers teachers (visits to the college). Further work will encompass awareness and ambition raising by support:

- ◆ Extending more direct partnership with the local rural communities and schools.
- ◆ Targeting student support to where it is most needed for those first applicants to HE where little advice and guidance is available within their family network.
- ◆ Curriculum themed support for selective courses – active interview sessions for students guidance and support for particular vocational courses
- ◆ Working with undergraduates: supporting and raising ambition through use of current students for mentoring and ambassadorship activity
- ◆ Summer schools to provide tastes of living and learning in HE
- ◆ Supporting care leavers financially and through guidance and support measures

The College will be building on its existing outreach course which now works with pupils from primary school through to mature Access learners.

We plan to increase the intensity of the work we already do in key areas of low participation, especially in the rural areas of the south east, in particular through mentoring and student ambassador schemes, which are mutually beneficial to current HE and to the College. Evidence shows that school and college pupils find it particularly helpful to engage with university students and those nearer their own age.

Additional access and retention measures / student financial support

1. Fee waivers for low income earners / unemployed

Plumpton College Bursaries

The College will award Plumpton College Bursaries (to the value of £40,000 annually) as **£1,000 fee waivers** in each year of study for students in the following categories who are not eligible for National Scholarship Course bursaries:

- Household income of less than £16,190
- care leavers
- students with a recognised physical or learning disability
- students identified through the *Accord Plus* scheme

2. NSP match funding (retention support in years 2 and 3) – NB match funding will be committed by the College but we appreciate that there will be no NSP allocation in 2012-2013

Plumpton College Scholarships (2012-2013 only)

(Eligibility - a declared income of less than £16,190 combined with low participation neighbourhood - Polar 1)

We intend that the NSP match funding (up to the total value of £45,275) to support access and retention activities will be spent across a variety of modes to provide value to students through economies of scale and environmental sustainability. This will be as:

either a £1,500 fee waiver and a £1,500 reduction in the cost of on-campus residential accommodation for students in College residences in the 2012-2013 academic year only;
or a fee waiver of £1,500 plus £1,500 towards College transport costs and meals for those students who are not resident in College accommodation.

Plumpton College Scholarships (2013-2014 onwards)

(Eligibility - a declared income of less than £16,190 combined with low participation neighbourhood - Polar 1)

We anticipate that full time NSP students who continue their studies with Plumpton College in 2013/14 and beyond will receive a Plumpton College Scholarship of £3,000 in each subsequent year of study, except the sandwich placement year, provided that the household income of that student remains £16,190 or less and the student remains in full time study. These will be as:

either a £1,500 fee waiver and a £1,500 reduction in the cost of on-campus residential accommodation for students in College residences in the 2012-2013 academic year only;
or a fee waiver of £1,500 plus £1,500 towards College transport and meals for those students who are not resident in College accommodation in the 2012-2013 academic year only.

3. Additional student support measures from 2012-2013 (years 1, 2 and 3)

Further access activities

Further activities (to the cost of £10,000) will be implemented:

- Additional staff capacity to engage directly with schools to encourage progression to HE
- Additional staff capacity to support the application process, pre interview visits to the college and support with interview technique.

Further retention activities

Further activities (to the cost of £11,275) will be implemented:

- Additional staff capacity to monitor and track students starting HE from 'non-traditional' backgrounds
- Additional staff capacity to coach and mentor students in the early stages of their course – providing advice guidance and support
- Additional guidance on pastoral support and counselling
- Additional support for diagnoses and planning to support learning difficulties, eg dyslexia / ADHD.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Deputy Principal Academic and Quality and the Director of Finance are responsible for the delivery of this agreement and the College is committed to monitor compliance and progress against the milestones.

The major targets/milestones relate to data collection and analysis and therefore monitoring will examine existing data streams (effectively our current benchmark) and track the improvements made during 2012-2013, at which point more accurate benchmark data should be in place which will enable the College to demonstrate targeted expenditure.

Targets and Milestones

The College will work towards the following milestones:

1. Promote the benefits and opportunities of higher education entry in 2012-2013 to the target groups in 2011-2012 through a focused marketing campaign.
2. Define and then improve the baseline proportion of financially disadvantaged students receiving full or partial state support, participating in our HE courses.
3. Monitor the percentage of student receiving bursaries, increase from 57% (2009-2010) to 64% in 2016-2017.
4. Raise the proportion of participation from students from 'non traditional' backgrounds from 39% to 52% by 2016-2017.
5. Improve the baseline proportion of HE students from low participation neighbourhoods (Polar 1) from 13% (2009-2011) to 19% by 2016-2017.
6. Improve the baseline proportion of students with physical and/or learning disability in HE courses from 12% (2009-2010) to 15% by 2016-2017.
7. Develop and achieve attendance at pre-course study skills events from students in the target groups of 42% by 2016-2017.
8. Achieve in-year first year retention for students within the target groups from 82% 2009-10 to 87% by 2016-2017.
9. Improve attendance rates of students from the target groups from 86% 2009-2010 to 93% by 2016-2017.

Provision of information to students and prospective students

Information for students on the fees and financial support available will be detailed in the College prospectus and on the College website. Illustrations of the net costs of studying on their courses will be provided, including estimates on the cost of living for students living on and off campus. The prospectus will also advise prospective students of the targeted support that will be given to them to study on HE courses and achieve their qualifications.

Plumpton College provides a high level of academic and pastoral support to students. Admissions, Course Tutors and the Marketing Team will provide information regarding the fee level and financial support available at Careers Events, Taster Days and Careers mornings. This will be in addition to numerous promotion events at schools, careers events and shows and fairs.

The strength of the support for students is evidenced by the national accreditation for Investors in careers and Matrix accreditation for IAG. The College will publish clear, accessible and timely information for applicants and students on the fees that we charge and the financial support we offer. We will do this both through our own institutional information channels, particularly our website, and also through the provision of information to UCAS and the SLC in order to help them populate their applicant facing web services. Information regarding the fees and the financial support available through the College will be sent to students with their offer of a place.

Table 5 - Milestones and targets

Table 5a - Statistical milestones and targets relating to your applicants, entrants or student body (e.g. HESA, UCAS or internal targets)

Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Baseline		Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
		Baseline year	Baseline data	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Applications	Promote the benefits and opportunities of higher education entry in 2012-2013 to the target groups in 2011-2012 through a focused marketing campaign.	2011-2012							Promotion activity defined with 20 target groups. Expect 10% growth in target group number per annum.
Low-income backgrounds	Define and then improve the baseline proportion of financially disadvantaged students receiving full or partial state support, participating in our HE courses.	2011-2012							Define baseline proportions, currently researching. Expect incremental increases of 1-2% per annum
Low-income backgrounds	Monitor the percentage of student receiving bursaries, increase from 57% (2009-2010) to 64% in 2016-2017.	2009-2010	57%	58%	59%	60%	62%	64%	College will be reviewing form of bursaries to provide a wider range of cost effective support focussed on individual student needs
Applications	Raise the proportion of participation from students from 'non traditional' backgrounds (NS-SEC 4-7 or with non A level qualifications) from 39% to 52% by 2016-2017.	2010-2011	39%	42%	46%	48%	50%	52%	
Other (please give details in the next column)	Improve the baseline proportion of HE students from low participation neighbourhoods (Polar 1) from 13% (2009-2011) to 19% by 2016-2017	2009-2011	13%	14%	16%	17%	18%	19%	
Applications	Develop and achieve attendance at pre-course study skills events from students in the target groups of 42% by 2016-2017.	2011-2012	20%	20%	28%	36%	40%	42%	
Non continuation: Young (HESA Table T3a)	Achieve in-year first year retention for students within the target groups from 82% 2009-10 to 87% by 2016-2017.	2009-2010	82%	83%	84%	85%	86%	87%	

[illegible]

Table 5b - Other milestones and targets

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around your outreach work (including collaborative outreach work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access. These should be measurable outcomes based targets and should focus on the number of pupils reached by a particular activity/programme, or number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.

[illegible]