

**MYERSCOUGH COLLEGE  
Access Agreement  
2012-13**

**Introduction**

This access agreement sets out the tuition fees and financial support arrangements for higher education Foundation Degree courses at Myerscough College from 1st September 2012. It describes the amount of tuition fee income to be spent on access measures and how this income will be spent in order to safeguard and maintain fair access.

All higher education courses at the College are validated by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN). Myerscough is the largest partner college of UCLAN and has a mature and established relationship with the University. The College maintains a high level of independence in the delivery of higher education, a relationship which is founded on the quality of specialist provision at the College and its proven ability to manage higher education programmes. This College has consulted extensively with UCLAN in the production of this Access Agreement.

Myerscough College is a further education college delivering higher education courses in land based and sports subjects. The College strap line is '*Opportunities for all to Succeed*'. This reflects the high level of commitment from the College to widening participation and the emphasis on quality of delivery and student support in the development of high level academic and employability skills. The emphasis on employability skills was reinforced by the 2010 Myerscough College Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review (IQER) report by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which identified good practice in '*the high level of employer engagement in curriculum development, review and assessment, and the role of the College's commercial activities in raising students' entrepreneurial awareness*'.

The 2010-11 year 1 cohort comprised 499 students of which 284 were full-time and 215 were part-time. 228 of the full time year 1 students were on Foundation Degrees. Indicative enrolments for 2011-12 reflect increased demand with 592 year 1 students of which 372 are full time and 220 are part time. 307 of the full time students are on Foundation Degrees.

The table below indicates internal data on proportions of higher education students for 2010-11 according to different priority groups.

Gender	Female	44%
	Male	56%
Age Group	Under 19	20%
	19-25	35%
	25+	45%
Ethnicity	All other ethnic groups	2%
	White	89%
	Unknown	8%
Learning Difficulty or Difficulty	LLDD – Yes	9%
	LLDD – No	86%
	LLDD - Unknown	5%
Uplift*	Uplift – None	85%
	Uplift - Ward	15%

\* Ward uplift is based on students from a deprived area postcode on LSC's file, similar to the POLAR 2 method. Ward uplift is a valid HESA student record entry.

The College has student numbers that are both directly funded and indirectly funded via UCLAN. Myerscough investment in the retention and outreach measures for indirectly funded students for 2012-13 is covered in the UCLAN Access Agreement. This Access Agreement covers students on those Foundation Degree courses that are directly funded from 2012-13.

### **Tuition Fee Limits**

The nature of specialist courses at the College means that the majority of provision falls into price band B. In 2012-13 the College proposes that the tuition fees required to support the quality of delivery on these resource-intensive Foundation Degree courses for full time students will be £7500 per year.

The College may increase tuition fees annually by the inflationary amount and/or agreed amount set each year by the Government.

### **Expenditure on Additional Access Measures**

The College invests in significant access initiatives as identified in the sections on outreach and retention below. Internal data on recruitment from priority groups suggests indicative performance against widening participation bench marks has been good and the College is committed to undertaking further analysis in this area. The College recognises there could be threats to participation under new funding arrangements for 2012 and will continue to invest in outreach measures to ensure that potential applicants are fully informed of the higher education opportunities available to them.

The College has no direct National Scholarship Programme (NSP) numbers allocated for 2012-13. However, 12 NSP's at £3000 have been allocated via UCLAN indirect contract. These will be match funded with a further 12 at £3000 by the College. Myerscough will provide support for those students as detailed under the UCLAN Access Agreement. Students will be able to select how they would like the funds to be allocated through discounted accommodation or other similar institutional service, and/or a financial bursary. From 2013-14 the College will have NSP numbers on a direct contract and the College will continue to provide the above match funding and support mechanisms for those students.

Bursaries based on the National Scholarship Programme will be targeted at new students from low income households with a declared income of less than £25,000. Full details of eligibility and support arrangements will be published for potential applicants.

As the College has no National Scholarship Programme allocation for 2012-13 we will extend the above financial support to all eligible students up to an overall allocation of £22,500. The additional bursaries will be targeted at, and made available to all students from households with less than £25,000 income. Additional bursaries will be in the form of means tested payments in kind up to a value of £1000 per student dependent upon level of household income, to ensure students with the greatest need receive the maximum award. Students will be able to select how they would like the funds to be made available through contribution towards accommodation, course equipment, food and travel. This amounts to an allocation of an estimated £22,500 based on the current 15% of students who are from ward uplift areas (see table above). This scheme is initially for students in year one, but will be reviewed annually dependent upon the level of National Scholarship Programme received. This is a parallel bursary scheme for students in hardship and will be allocated to those in the greatest need meeting the criteria.

The College has been an active member of the Lancashire Lifelong Learning Network (Lancs LLN). The HEFCE funding for the LLN will cease in December 2011 and the College is keen to ensure that some of the outreach measures previously funded by the LLN will continue to be supported by the College and incorporated into our access measures.

## **Additional Access Measures**

### **Outreach**

The College is committed to widening participation and significant time and resources are invested in the development of outreach activities to fulfill the College's widening participation aspirations. Key aspects of this work includes:

- Developing a portfolio of courses that provides progression routes at the College for all subjects from level 2 through to level 6 (including some to level 7). This wide portfolio improves opportunities for local access to higher education and enhances access to subject specific higher education for students from the College outreach centres in East Lancashire, Croxteth (Liverpool) and Wythenshawe (Manchester).
- Developing progression agreements with all the major further education Colleges in Lancashire through the Lancashire Lifelong Learning Network to enhance entry and transition to higher education, particularly in areas of traditionally low participation in higher education such as East Lancashire
- Delivery of vocational further education courses at outreach centres in East Lancashire, Wythenshawe (Manchester) and Croxteth (Liverpool) to enhance opportunities for progression in areas with a high proportion of low income households and traditionally low participation in higher education.
- Developing activities to raise the profile of higher education in schools and colleges in the North West of England including schools with a high proportion of students from under-represented socio-economic groups

The success of the College's outreach activities is reflected in the proportion of students from a ward uplift area. Ward uplift is based on students from a deprived area postcode on LSC's file, similar to the POLAR 2 method and is a valid HESA student record entry. The proportion of students from ward uplift areas for 2010-11 was 15%. This is above the equivalent HESA widening participation benchmark of 12% students from low participation neighbourhoods.

### **Student Retention and Success**

Student retention has been a significant area of focus for the College in recent years. For many of the priority groups the transition into higher education can be a daunting experience. The central student support services unit, 'The Core' has been developed to provide extensive additional academic and pastoral support for students, including the provision of a student finance advisor to provide additional IAG on financial help available for students from low income households. Key additional initiatives that will be introduced or improved for 2012 to enhance the transition into higher education and support student retention are:

- Additional improvements will be made to the 'Student Support Register' to add reporting functions for students receiving DSA and from low participation areas. This will enhance monitoring and support for students in these priority groups with academic and/or personal difficulties
- E-portfolios will be introduced to enhance personal development planning and study skills for students. This will be linked to the VLE to provide additional support with study skills and assist the transition into higher education. This is of particular benefit to students who may have been out of education for some time.

- The extended induction period will be further developed to enhance awareness of UCLAN student support mechanisms and access to initiatives such as 'Flying Start', 'Fresh Start', 'WISER' (study support skills), 'Futures' and the 'I' (the University one-stop student enquiries and information centre). These initiatives provide additional support for priority groups such as second career and mature students, ethnic groups and those in receipt of DSA.
- Additional review processes will be undertaken for individual courses identified as having low retention and/or achievement rates. These reviews will focus on reasons for student withdrawals to identify if socio-economic factors have had an impact.

The College was currently indirectly funded in 2010-11 so HESA retention data is not available. Internal data is generated for full cohort retention rather than in-year data and shows increases in retention for full time students from 80% in 2008-09 to 83% in 2009-10 and 85% in 2010-11. The success of the above initiatives is further evidenced in the 2010 NSS outcomes for the College returned an overall score of 86% satisfaction in questions relating to Academic Support which is above the national upper quartile of 80%.

### **Targets and Milestones**

The College's specific targets and milestones for 2012-13 are outlined in Annex B. Internal College data sources are used to set targets and milestones as HESA widening participation performance indicators do not cover further education colleges.

At present access to externally comparable baseline data for the College is weak and one of the main targets is to develop an improved methodology for the collection and analysis of data that can be aligned to HESA widening participation, retention and completion data. This methodology will enable the establishment of baseline data which will then be used to generate targets for future Access Agreements.

Other targets relate to the continuing outreach and retention initiatives to improve the recruitment of students from priority groups and achieve annual increases in the retention and achievement of students.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements**

The Deputy Principal Finance and Funding and the Assistant Principal Higher Education are responsible for the delivery and monitoring of this Access Agreement. Monitoring of compliance against the milestones will be measured using internal data streams and external data sources via UCAS and HESA. Monitoring of compliance will be reported through the College Curriculum Quality Group who report to the Senior Management Team and ultimately to the Corporation Quality and Standards and Finance committees. The Corporation Quality and Standards Committee includes student representation membership.

### **Provision of information to students**

Information for students on the fees and financial support available will be detailed in the College prospectus and on the College website.

The College is also undertaking a JISC funded project 'Course Data – making the most of Course Information' to improve information for prospective students and ensure alignment of internal data streams to external requirements of organisations such as UCAS, HEFCE and HESA. The outcomes of the project will further help prospective students to make more accurate decisions about where and how to study.



Information, advice and guidance (IAG) on tuition fees and financial support for higher education students are provided by the student enquiries, student finance, student services, admissions, course tutors and marketing teams. These teams continue to provide financial advice for students whilst on their course. A series of course advice events and open days are held throughout the year to provide IAG to prospective students and many external marketing events are attended including UCAS events. Information regarding the fees and the financial support available through the College are discussed further at student interviews.

The College will ensure that information is provided to UCAS and other key organisations in a timely manner to populate their applicant-facing web services.

This 2012-13 Access Agreement is subject to ratification by the College Corporation.

M. Cottam  
Assistant Principal Higher Education  
October 2011

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 year	Baseline data	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)
				2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Completion/Non continuation (other - please give details in the next column)	As a College we do not have access to HESA data. We aim to review our current retention criteria and gather baseline data in a format that is consistent with HESA criteria and then use this to establish annual milestones and targets for improvement. In the absence of this data currently we will set retention targets based on current internal criteria.	2010-11	86%	87%	89%	90%	90%	90%	The college currently only has internally generated data and we are aware that we need to refine the criteria we use internally to reflect HESA criteria. This will enable us to publish comparable data and set realistic and comparable targets.
Other (please give details in the next column)	As detailed above, in the absence of HESA data the college cannot track the socio-economic background of students in the same way. We intend to review our current widening participation criteria and gather baseline data in a format that is consistent with HESA criteria to establish annual targets	2012-13	N/A	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	The lack of socio-economic data in a format that is consistent with HESA data limits the College's ability to respond to the widening participation performance indicators in a meaningful way. The establishment of comparable baseline data upon which future targets for different priority groups can be based is clearly important
Socio-economic (other measure - please give details in the next column)	We will continue to improve and expand our outreach activities to remain above the equivalent HESA widening participation benchmark for students from low participation neighbourhoods (source - internal ward uplift data)	2010-11	15%	15%	16%	17%	17%	17%	The current College measure is based on ward uplift. Ward uplift is based on students from a deprived area postcode on LSC's file, similar to the POLAR 2 method. Ward uplift is a valid HESA student record entry.

**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.

Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Baseline year	Baseline data	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)
				2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	
Lifelong learning	Maintain progression agreements with further education colleges in Lancashire (milestones are for numbers of separate progression agreements)	2010-11	35	35	35	35	35	35	Extensive progression agreements are already in place. With the end of the Lifelong Learning Network the College will continue to support the maintenance of these progression agreements.
Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Develop widening participation initiatives and practices to improve recruitment, retention and achievement	2012-13	N/A	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	This aim reflects information within our Access Agreement and is linked to the milestones for outreach and retention in table 5a. Underpinning this is a schedule of activity which ensures that the activities identified in the Access Agreement are undertaken and achieved.
Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Develop outreach activities with schools and colleges in the North West of England including schools with a high proportion of students from under-represented socio-economic groups (milestones are for numbers of schools and colleges events)	2010-11	273	275	280	285	285	285	Extensive work with Schools is already undertaken and the college will continue to invest in developing further outreach activity

Contextual data	Develop data streams that are compatible with external organisations to meet requirements for public information from 2012	2012-13	N/A	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	See commentary	This will target will be underpinned by a JISC funded project to review and develop electronic course data feeds in a format compatible with external organisations such as HEFCE, HESA and UCAS
Student support services	Further enhance the 'Student Support' register to identify, track and monitor the academic and pastoral support for students (milestones are for the percentage of students who are on the Student Support register and are retained through successful monitoring and support)	2010-11	78%	80%	83%	85%	85%	85%	Achievement of this target is linked to the retention targets and milestones which have been outlined in Table 5a. (Note not all students who withdraw are on the Student Support register so the milestones are not exactly the same as the retention milestones.)