

Access Agreement 2008/09

1.0 Context

- 1.1 The Arts Institute at Bournemouth is a specialist higher education Institution with a commitment to providing all-through provision in the areas of arts, design and media from Saturday Art School through further education to higher education. The Institute prides itself on providing a supportive and friendly environment which places students and their work at the centre of its community.
- 1.2 The Institute's Widening Participation funding is currently used to support both on-course activity and outreach work.
- 1.3 On-course support includes study skills support for students with a disability through the Learning Support Unit; financial support for Educational Psychologist's reports; and a contribution to support the work of the Student Advice Centre, which provides career education, information and guidance; disability support; counselling services; and an accommodation service.
- 1.4 The Institute has always acknowledged that much of its work will have medium-term impact, as it seeks to raise aspiration. Our initiatives to widen access build on these existing services and strategic priorities, but are intended to be more specifically targeted towards under-represented groups, with the aim of more immediate results.
- 1.5 Historically, the Institute has been successful in attracting students with disabilities (where its performance is significantly above the benchmark). The local demographics, as well as the nature of the course offer, has posed particular difficulties with regard to the recruitment of students from ethnic minorities, students from lower socio-economic groups or low participation neighbourhoods, and mature students. The proposals set out in this document are intended to address these key areas, as well as reinforcing previous achievement.
- 1.6 The Institute has established links with a number of schools and colleges. It has developed further links with a wider range of institutions to support its intention to increase applications from those groups currently under-represented within its student profile. It should be noted that many students from linked schools, in particular, join the Institute as Further Education students before progressing onto HE courses. However, all students who progress from designated schools and colleges onto HE courses, via whatever route, will be included under the terms of this scheme. In addition, students who have participated in projects to raise awareness, aspiration or attainment may be eligible for inclusion.
- 1.7 In accordance with good practice, the Institute extends its offers of support to students from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, as well as England.
- 1.8 The Institute acknowledges that the introduction of new procedures often has unforeseen consequences, and notes that there may be particular groups of potential applicants who are disadvantaged, but who do not fall within the range of under-represented groups at whom bursaries and other means of support are targeted. We shall keep this under review.

2.0 Fee limits and eligibility

- 2.1 From 2008/09, the Arts Institute will charge a standard fee of £3,145 per year for all undergraduate courses (but see 4.1.6 below). This is reflective of the high quality of

education provided, and the excellent employment prospects of Arts Institute graduates, as well as the high cost of study within the arts, design and media subject areas.

- 2.2 The fee will rise with inflation in accordance with the regulations published by the government on an annual basis.
- 2.3 The Institute acknowledges the cost of living in the Bournemouth and Poole sub-region, as well as the additional expense of undergraduate study in arts, design and media. Its bursaries are specifically designed to make the opportunities for studying at the Institute more accessible through direct financial support, and to encourage student retention by rewarding completion of each academic year. Alongside its package of bursaries, the Institute has also introduced a range of measures which are designed to support and simplify the student learning experience. These bursaries and other measures are described in this section.
- 2.4 Foundation degree students who articulate directly to the final year of an Honours degree course at the Institute will be treated as continuing students, and will be entitled to the same provisions as students who progress to the final year having followed the Honours degree course.
- 2.5 Students who enrolled on an Honours degree or Foundation Degree prior to 2008/09 will be treated as continuing students and will remain under the thresholds in place in their year of entry (subject to any inflationary increases).
- 2.6 Students who have deferred entry for 2008/09 will be eligible for the awards described herein.

3.0 Amounts of additional fee income to be spent on access measures

- 3.1 The Institute has devised a range of support mechanisms to encourage applications from, and subsequent retention of, students from under-represented groups. This includes the intention to raise the total number of applications from within these groups, which makes a precise determination of the amounts required difficult. However, based on an analysis of the cohorts at the Institute in recent years, and taking into account our analysis of the operation of the Agreement, the Institute estimates that over 20% of its additional income is dedicated to promoting access to under-represented groups.
- 3.2 The Institute acknowledges that some of these measures will be more effective towards the later part of the period covered by this Agreement. We shall continue to ringfence 15% of our additional fee income in each academic year, to ensure that funding is available to support our target groups; these funds are allocated to discretionary funds such as those to support Educational Visits, and other on-course support (see 4.3 and 4.7 below).

4.0 Bursaries and other financial support for students

Bursaries

- 4.1.1 The Institute offers a £310 bursary to all students in receipt of the full £2,835 grant, utilising the Higher Education Bursary and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS). This will be paid in February.
- 4.1.2 We further offer a bursary of £160 to all students who receive a grant of £1,050-2,834. These bursaries are grants which are awarded to all qualifying students.

- 4.1.3 In order to support retention and to enable students to recoup some course costs, for 2008/09 students in receipt of a full maintenance grant a payment of £150 will be made on completion of their Level 4 study. (This progression scholarship does not apply to students undertaking Year Zero study.) For students who are in receipt of a full maintenance grant, a payment of £225 will be made when they complete their Level 5 study; and a further £425 when they complete their Level 6 study. (For students who undertake a Foundation Degree, the £425 will apply following successful articulation and completion of an Honours degree.) These additional bursaries will be paid following completion of the academic year. Please note that the totals for Progression Scholarships are subject to annual review, but may not be increased in line with inflation.
- 4.1.4 In addition, the Institute will work towards making progress in breaking down the barriers to young people from care entering higher education, by offering them a bursary of £2,000 for each academic year of their undergraduate course. The bursary will be paid in February of each year, and is in the form of a grant. This award is in addition to the other bursaries and benefits to which a student may be entitled. The Institute reserves the right to claim back a proportion of this grant if the student fails to complete the year, but will consider each case on its merits.
- 4.1.5 All these bursaries will also rise in line with inflation, in direct correlation to the increase in our standard fee.
- 4.1.6 **Year Zero**
The Institute has introduced a Year Zero for some awards to support recruitment. This may be a suitable route into higher education for some non-traditional entrants who have a clear career strategy, but who currently lack some of the requisite skills for admission onto very highly competitive courses. The fee for Year Zero will be the standard fee, which has been confirmed as £1,255 for 2008/09, but we shall use a proportion of our additional fee income to waive this fee for students from our target groups.
- 4.2 **Course material fees**
- 4.2.1 The Institute no longer charges a course material fee for all undergraduate courses. This removes the requirement for students to pay an upfront fee in respect of certain course materials.
- 4.3 **Educational visits**
- 4.3.1 In order to support their full participation in the educational experience, students from designated linked schools and colleges will be supported to participate in Educational Visits during their course of study at the Institute. In addition, students who have participated in projects to raise awareness, aspiration or attainment may be eligible for inclusion.
We have established a fund to support this activity, to which students can apply for support. The maximum level of support will normally be £250 in each academic year, but in exceptional cases a higher grant may be awarded. The total fund comprises £18,000 in 2008/09, rising to £20,000 thereafter.
- 4.4 **Reduction in Institute accommodation fees**
- 4.4.1 Up to 30 students from our designated widening participation target groups who apply for a place in Halls accommodation, whose home address is outside a 25-mile radius from the Institute or who otherwise fall within the criteria of acceptance for a Halls place, receive a 25% reduction in Halls fees. (Halls fees may differ depending on location and type of room. Allocation to a specific room is at the Institute's discretion. In 2008/09 the weekly rate for Halls range from £85 - £120, with a standard contract of 39 weeks, and hence a maximum reduction of £1,170.) Applications will be

considered in accordance with our Halls Policy. This is particularly intended to support those students from outside the local community, and will normally only apply to students in their first year of full-time study at the Institute, but in certain cases (for example, students with a disability which makes shared accommodation impractical) students may be permitted to remain in Halls throughout their course.

4.5 Public Transport vouchers

- 4.5.1 Students from the Institute's designated linked schools and colleges receive vouchers towards public transport, e.g. bus travel or rail vouchers, up to a total value of £325. (This represents the cost of approximately nine months' free travel on local routes.) In addition, students who have participated in projects to raise awareness, aspiration or attainment may be eligible for inclusion. Public transport vouchers are not available to students in on-campus Institute accommodation.

4.6 Vouchers worth up to £150 on bicycles and accessories for all those in receipt of a maintenance grant of over £1050

- 4.6.1 All students who are in receipt of a maintenance grant of over £1,050 are offered vouchers to the value of £150 which can be spent on bicycles and cycling accessories. The focus on maintenance grants extends coverage (as opposed to a strict focus on linked schools and colleges). Having purchased a bicycle, students will be offered vouchers to the value of £50 on accessories in subsequent years.

4.7 On-course support

- 4.7.1 The Institute has already established a fund which provides emergency support for students on-course, which has been successful in supporting retention. We have established a further fund, which is targeted at those students from our target groups and to which applications can be made in times of particular and unexpected hardship. This fund has been established with a minimum of £25,000, and unspent monies from other funds will revert to this fund as appropriate.

4.8 Appointment of administrative staff to support the Scheme

- 4.8.1 The Institute notes that the administration of this scheme is complex, and has appointed a dedicated member of staff, the Additional Grant Officer, to support the administration, monitoring and development of the scheme. Some further resource will be dedicated to management support and research costs.

4.9 Disability support

- 4.9.1 The Institute currently supports Educational Psychologists' reports, and applications for the Disabled Student's Allowance, through its Widening Participation funding. We also offer extensive on-course learning support, which has been effective in securing excellent retention levels for these students. In addition students with disabilities may be entitled to apply for a reduction in accommodation costs, as outlined at paragraph 4.4.1 above. We do not therefore intend to fund further work on disability support at this time, but will keep this matter under review.

5.0 Provision of information to students

- 5.1 The Institute acknowledges that the new arrangements are complicated, and that potential applicants will wish to be clear about bursary provision.
- 5.2 A summary of our bursary provision is published on our website, and we also produce an information sheet which is included with course information and available at Open Days. The information sheet summarises the arrangements outlined in section 4

above. These arrangements are also included within our Financial Advice and Support talk at Open Days.

We also target fee and support information at under-represented groups through appropriate outreach activity, and ensure that enquirers from identified linked schools and colleges (including those who completed their compulsory education before publication of the Access Agreement) are provided with the relevant information.

- 5.3 Extensive staff briefings, HE tutor briefings and staff development workshops ensure that all those staff who come into contact with potential applicants are clear about the arrangements, and where further information can be found.
- 5.4 We also work closely with Student Services and Students' Union to inform campaigns to reach the target audience and have a visible presence at induction to reinforce information about bursary support available to eligible students.

6.0 Outreach work

- 6.1 The Institute conducts significant outreach work as part of its Widening Participation Strategy, which includes on-course support for students. This work has been extended to develop partnerships with new schools and colleges in support of our recruitment of under-represented groups, which in turn necessitates the allocation of additional resource through the period of this Agreement.
- 6.2 Following the identification of appropriate schools and colleges, which may not be from the local area, we have developed links which will both raise aspiration within the organisation, and encourage application to the Institute. This includes student mentoring, visits to the Institute for taster-days, and the opportunity to meet with current staff and students, as well as work within the schools and colleges.
- 6.3 To raise awareness and opportunities in education in arts, design and media, the Institute holds Portfolio Advice days where target groups of students are encouraged to seek critical advice and discuss career opportunities with current academic staff.
- 6.4 The funding allocation to outreach reflects the fact that much of this work is already conducted through our Widening Participation Strategy, but that this work will develop and extend throughout the period of the Agreement.

7.0 Milestones

- 7.1 The Institute is currently revising its Widening Participation Strategy, to which this Access Agreement will be an appendix, and has noted the importance of monitoring success through achievements against the HESA Performance Indicators, supplemented by targets for the rates of application and offer to non-traditional learners, and overall student satisfaction ratings for those in receipt of support.
- 7.2 Whilst acknowledging the delay in publication of Performance Indicator data, we believe that it is preferable to monitor our performance through publicly available information where possible. We shall of course monitor these same indicators internally to ensure that we are well placed to understand the impact of our work.
- 7.3 In reviewing progress to date, we are aware that the first year of operation of Access Agreement across the sector appears to have had limited impact. Whilst this is disappointing, we note the importance of changing culture and expectations over time, and hence anticipate improved performance as the new arrangements become better known and better understood; and as the Institute learns the promotional mechanisms which are most effective.

- 7.4 The Institute has reviewed its initial targets, which were set for the first three years of the Access Agreement. We routinely monitor performance against these criteria on an annual basis and have noted that because of the relatively small numbers involved, apparent performance can vary considerably year on year. We have therefore made only minor revisions to the original targets at this stage, but will continue to review the effectiveness of our Access Agreement and its impact on our recruitment and may set more challenging targets in future years. The targets are attached as Appendix One.
- 7.5 The Institute considers each of its targets to be minima, and hence where targets have been exceeded, there will be no activity designed to reduce subsequent achievement. However, targets will not themselves necessarily be revised upwards.

8.0 Institutional monitoring arrangements

- 8.1 Annually, the Institute reports to the Office for Fair Access, OFFA, in its Annual Monitoring Report. This includes all expenditure from additional fee income on financial support for lower income students and other under-represented groups and reports progress against objectives and milestones.
- 8.2 The Institute receives an annual report on its Widening Participation activity which reports on activity, and outcomes. The report is considered in detail by both Equality and Inclusivity Committee and by Institute Standards and Quality Committee, with a summary report made to Academic Board. The clearer milestones and targets outlined in this Access Agreement enable a more evaluative consideration of progress, and a regular review of success.
- 8.3 The continuous monitoring of performance against target, and of take-up of the various access measures, also enables these measures to be amended where appropriate to ensure that the identified groups are reached. In order to inform the efficacy of its arrangements, the Institute will use its Student Perception Survey to contribute to data collection on the successful implementation of bursary awards.
- 8.4 Specifically, the Institute has considered a number of further measures which it might wish to introduce to support its target groups. These include a further increase in the support which is now extended to all those in receipt of the maximum grant to cover additional costs of living and study; support for entry to competitions; and additional support for its outreach work. We shall continue to monitor both the success of our existing measures, and our overall patterns of expenditure, and these will inform any future amendments to this Agreement.

Appendix One: Targets 2007/10

Group	Performance 02/03	Performance 04/05	Performance 05/06	Target *06/07	Target *07/08	Target *08/09	Target 09/10
Young full-time undergraduate entrants							
From lower socio-economic groups	25	27.5	26.2	26.5	28	29.5	31.0
From low participation neighbourhoods	5.8	7.1	8.5	8.0	10.0	12.0	12.0
Mature full-time undergraduate entrants							
Proportion who are mature	40.7	20.0	20.0				
Numbers (for reference)	32/85	100/435					
No previous HE & from low participation neighbourhood	7.5	8.2	5.9	8.5	9.5	10.5	10.5
Ethnic minority first year students (UK domiciled) (%)	3.0	4.6		5.0	7.0	9.0	10.5
Non-continuation (not in HE)							
Young	5.6	4.1	5.5	5.2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Mature	18.3	16.4	10.3	16.0	14.0	12.0	11.0
All students	9.1	6.2	6.4	8.9	8.7	8.0	7.5
Young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	17.4	9.5	**	15.0	12.5	10.0	10.0
Young entrants from other neighbourhoods	4.4	3.4	5.1	4.25	4.1	4.0	4.0
Mature entrants with no previous HE qualification	**	17.5	16.0				14.0
Mature entrants with previous HE qualification	20.3		0	18.0	16.0	14.0	12.5
Percentage in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance							
Full-time undergraduate	6.5	13.8	14.1	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Part-time undergraduate	1.6	7.3	13.1	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0

* Targets were set initially against 02/03 performance. Some have been revised based on subsequent performance, but the Institute has been cautious not to react to individual results which may be unrepresentative.

* *The numbers in some non-continuation categories are periodically too small to be recorded. This demonstrates the challenge of setting meaningful targets in this area of work, and hence whilst targets are set, performance must be reviewed cautiously.