



Birkbeck University of London

# **Access Agreement**

## **2014/15**

with the Office for Fair Access

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## 1. Introduction and context

Since the foundation of the College in 1823, Birkbeck has sought to provide higher education opportunities to people who would not otherwise have access. The College's founder, George Birkbeck, had a vision of the power of education to transform and improve lives, and this founding commitment to social change and widening access is what still drives the College today. The means of achieving this goal adapts with the times but our continued commitment is unwavering. As the sector moves through particularly turbulent times, Birkbeck's determination to pursue its mission has never been stronger or more important.

Birkbeck is a global top-200 university and 'London's Evening University', where the majority of undergraduate students work during the day and study in the evening. As London's only specialist provider of flexible evening higher education, Birkbeck has long encouraged applications from students without traditional qualifications.

Our 2014/15 access agreement highlights a particular innovation in our provision. Alongside our traditional four-year part-time evening programmes, we now offer the majority of our undergraduate degree provision as a three-year intensive evening programme that fits UCAS and UKBA's 'full-time' criteria. As HEFCE record a 40% downturn in part-time enrolments in 2012, our new unique mode of study is proving to be extremely popular, and we are pleased to note that it is attracting a very high proportion of students from low-income backgrounds. We are determined to ensure that our new three-year and our traditional four-year model of evening provision continues to fulfil Birkbeck's mission to open up opportunity to cohorts of students for whom the alternative may be not to study at all.

The majority of our undergraduate provision remains through a part-time mode. Part-time students are the most non-traditional students in the sector and the hardest to reach. They require the most support and currently receive the least from government and other agencies involved in the HE pipeline. Birkbeck welcomes the fact that part-time students are now included in the access agreement framework on an equal footing to full-time students and will be working hard to ensure part-time and mature students benefit fully from higher education opportunities and are not disadvantaged. The access agreement for 2014/15 sets out some of the ways that we are addressing these challenges, including through:

- **Outreach** activities that are different to models used by other HEIs as our evening model and our student body require different initiatives. Birkbeck leads the way in terms of innovation and impact with its outreach and recruitment work with both the traditional market of mature learners and the rapidly growing proportion of younger students. We believe this active and energetic commitment to outreach work is every bit as important as financial incentives.
- **Retention** activities that have proven to be successful. The agreement sets out our aim of continuing to run our recruitment and retention activities for non-traditional learners in a fully integrated way achieving further improvements while also being relevant to a changing cohort.
- **Financial support** that will ensure that greater numbers of students can benefit from bursaries, whilst maintaining the simplicity and clarity to encourage the greatest possible take-up of the available support.

- **Providing accessible entry routes** to HE through our Certificate of Higher Education programmes, which are of most interest to those students with few previous qualifications and with the lowest confidence.
- **A major new collaboration** with the University of East London (UEL), establishing a unique partnership that will provide impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) to non-traditional groups.

2012 has marked a challenging time for HEIs that cater for part-time students. Birkbeck is currently experiencing significant interest in part-time study with record website hits and bumper open evenings. However part-time students are still not enrolling. From the research we have conducted we know that this is to do with lack of confidence and uncertainty about the return on investment in the new fee and loan regime. Birkbeck is in the vanguard of ensuring that the sector pays attention to the worrying downturn in enrolments. Through detailing the initiatives outlined above, this access agreement reflects Birkbeck's determination to ensure that we remove the barriers that face part-time students in accessing the life-changing education that we can provide, while simultaneously offering a new and unique model of full-time evening study that is proving to be widening access to new groups of students.

## **2. Fees, student numbers and fee income**

We will maintain a tiered fee structure in 2014/15, continuing the principles already established in the College for differential pricing taking into account our academic, widening participation and lifelong learning missions. FTE fees will range from £4000 and £4800 for most Certificate of Higher Education modules and £6000 and £9000 for other Certificates and degree programmes.

The lowest fee represents a price of £1000 for a 30-credit module from a Certificate of Higher Education. Certificates attract a diverse range of students. Some choose to take one or two Certificate modules every year, to build up credit for a Certificate of Higher Education leading to entry to the first or second year of a degree, to gain or update professional skills or to pursue lifelong learning. Some choose to take more intensive Certificate programmes of up to 120 credits a year.

Our degree portfolio relies on our strong research reputation as a member of the 1994 group of research-intensive universities and in the top 25 in the last RAE. In 2014/15 we plan to have a standard FTE fee of £9000 for new entrants (previously, half of our degree provision had an £8000 FTE fee and half had a £9000 FTE fee). We will retain a fee of £6000 for some provision linked to access and social participation. We plan to invest the additional income into an expanded bursary scheme for degree students on middle as well as lower incomes, recognising that the economic downturn has affected both groups.

We are planning an average fee of £7000 FTE for 2014/15, before fee waivers are taken into account. This is made up of approximately:

- 1750 entrants on degrees and foundation degrees.
- 500 entrants on Certificate of Higher Education programmes.

- 3500 students enrolled on modular Certificate of Higher Education courses.

We estimate our total student body in 2014/15 will be made up of approximately:

- 4500 students on degrees and foundation degrees.
- 700 students on Certificate of Higher Education programmes.
- 3500 students enrolled on modular Certificate of Higher Education courses.

We are also expecting approximately 900 students paying old system fees to return to complete the fourth year of their part time degrees.

We estimate that our income from fees above the basic £6000 level will be £8.1M. We intend to invest approximately half of this in supporting our outreach, support and retention work and on an extended student financial support scheme.

### **3. Access and student success measures**

#### **3.1 Assessment of Birkbeck's access record**

Birkbeck is particularly attractive to mature students due to the fact that our mode of delivery is evening teaching. 94% of our part-time students and 67% of our full-time students are mature, against an England average of 91% and 21% respectively. Similarly, the vast majority (89% in 2012/13) of our students on undergraduate degrees and certificate programmes are studying on a part-time mode, although the proportion of full-time students studying in the evening is growing annually (20% of new entrants in 2012/13). As we have a different student body, our approach to access and outreach is therefore necessarily different to that of other universities and our targets on access and retention reflect this difference.

##### **3.1.1 Performance regarding part-time and mature students**

Birkbeck aims to make studying at higher education as accessible as possible to mature students who may not have had the opportunity to study earlier in life. We believe that all mature students with no previous experience of HE, especially those who have low incomes, are a valid target group for outreach activities, regardless of whether or not they live in the lowest participation neighbourhoods. We argue that the social mobility impact on mature student who have missed out on higher education earlier in life is equal, regardless of the participation area that they currently live in. We will therefore continue to target outreach activities towards students with no previous qualifications regardless of location, rather than focus significantly on POLAR-3 areas with the lowest participation at the expense of other areas that also have high numbers of people who have no higher education experience.

Due to this approach, our initial analysis of the financial support for 2012/13 shows that we have attracted a higher percentage of students with lower income than in previous years, and we expect that this positive figure for widening access will further increase in the coming years. We have however underperformed against the HESA benchmark regarding part-time students coming from low participation POLAR-3 neighbourhoods (1.7% against a location adjusted benchmark of 2.5%). A major barrier to many mature students is a requirement to hold a previous Level 3 qualification, but as we seek to ensure open access we are pleased that 35%

of our part-time undergraduate students have no previous qualification on entry to undergraduate study with us.

### **3.1.2 Performance regarding full-time and young students**

2012/13 was a significant year of growth in the provision of Birkbeck's three-year, full-time evening programmes, with 20 programmes available. Our analysis of the students on these programmes shows that 37% have a household income of under £20,000 and therefore received the NSP fee waiver of £3000, and 44% have an income of below £25,000 and received a bursary of £1000 per year. This demonstrates that full-time programmes delivered in the evening have the potential to widen access significantly. We are very keen to ensure that this potential is fully realised over the coming years, and that we attract students who may particularly benefit from our unique mode of full-time evening study.

We will closely monitor relevant data to ensure that the programmes do indeed widen access in terms of the proportion of students from state schools, and income levels of the students. Although the HESA data show that we currently miss our benchmark in these areas, the sample size currently published by HESA is too small (55 students) to take conclusions. As the provision is new it will take some time for a stable picture to emerge. Additionally, our outreach strategy has thus far focussed on our traditional market, but we plan to focus more on the new three-year evening provision and will monitor the impact of this work over the coming years.

### **3.1.3 Disability**

The percentage of our students who receive Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is high and has been increasing in recent years, with 7.2% of the student body in receipt of DSA against a benchmark of 5.1% (7.5% against a benchmark of 7.1% for full-time students). The amount by which we exceed the benchmark is particularly impressive given the fact that the vast majority of these students are part-time, and the 565 part-time students in receipt of DSA all require individual care despite representing an FTE of less than one.

As well as the measure set out in HESA table 7, the number of students who declare a disability but who are not eligible for DSA is also particularly high at Birkbeck. Our internal statistics demonstrate that 1934 students (10.3% of our undergraduate students) have declared a disability, a level that has increased steadily from 5.7% in 2006/07. The increase demonstrates the Disabilities Office's sustained efforts to increase the rate of disability testing among students.

In order to ensure that we continue to attract and support students with disabilities, the Disability Committee of the College will continue to monitor:

#### **Access:**

- The total number and percentage of the undergraduate student body which is made up of students claiming DSA.
- The total number and percentage of students who declare a disability.
- Whether the new provision of three-year evening programmes particularly attract students with disabilities.
- The classification of disabilities reported by students to ensure that the relevant support is provided and to identify any emerging trends.

Retention:

- The number and percentage of students with disabilities enrolling onto the second year of study.
- The breakdown of retention statistics by full- and part time provision and by the classification of disabilities in order to identify and address any issues arising.

Having analysed recent trends in our student body the College is appointing a Specific Learning Difficulties Co-ordinator in direct response to an observed increase in the number of students with SpLDs (Specific Learning Difficulties). The new post will provide an enhanced level of specialist advice to staff across the College. The Disability Office is also working with the Student Union to raise awareness of SpLDs specifically amongst BME students to encourage greater screening and to look to enhance the support provided to those who are diagnosed.

### **3.2 Assessment of Birkbeck's student success record**

Our internal data shows improved retention figures as measured by the proportion of students who successfully enrol onto their second year. The non-continuation rate has been falling consistently from 22% who failed to enrol onto their second year in 2008/09, to 20% in 2009/10, 19% in 2010/11 and down to 16% in 2011/12. We are particularly pleased with these results, which are made more impressive in that they were achieved against a backdrop of a significant rise of 53% in student numbers.

HESA data also demonstrates that we significantly outperformed our benchmark on non-continuation after two years after year of entry for part-time first degree entrants, consistently beating the benchmark over recent years. The most recent data in 2010/11 shows that 28.8% of our students were no longer in HE two years following year of entry, against a benchmark of 38%.

The impressive retention rates demonstrate that the retention strategy that the College has been pursuing has been successful and it will continue to be followed over the coming years.

### **3.3 Birkbeck's strategic approach to access and student success**

Since 2008, there has been a strategic focus on improving both the recruitment and the retention of undergraduate, non-traditional adult learners. This work has acknowledged that for adult learners the biggest impact on retention can be made during the pre-entry recruitment phase. A sustained and integrated 'student experience' initiative is led by the Pro-Vice-Master (PVM) for Student Experience, with strategic direction overseen through the Student Experience and Widening Participation Committee. This work starts at first point of contact with the College (usually three years before application) and finishes at the end of year one. Significant resources are loaded at the pre-entry phase to ensure that students start the right courses with the right academic and financial support in place.

The Pro-Vice-Master for Student Experience and the Pro-Vice-Master for Learning and Teaching launched a new Retention Strategy in 2010 that has overseen a sustained commitment in supporting the retention and success of our student body.

## **Access**

Birkbeck's access strategy is aimed at targeting mature students who have no previous HE experience and we therefore do not work in a significant way with students below Key Stage 5. Rather, we target the majority of our outreach resources at adults who are not well serviced with the necessary information and advice for making an informed choice on returning to higher education. While we realise that our target groups and our approach is different to that used by the majority of HEIs, we are proud of our approach and believe strongly that we should continue to focus on our strengths in successfully working with adults who are under-represented in higher education.

However, alongside this our new full-time three-year evening provision is attracting students who are younger than Birkbeck's traditional student body. We will be expanding our outreach activity to enable us to work with A-level and other level 3 students in order to highlight our new provision to them – a model of higher education that is unique to Birkbeck. The benefits of our new model is proving to be particularly attractive to students who are from households with low income, and 44% of the students on the full-time three-year programme are eligible for our financial support due to a household income below £25,000.

The College's outreach work is regularly evaluated to ensure that the activities are successful and as cost-effective as possible. Details of the main access projects are outlined in Section 3.5. An example of where the work has been evaluated and adjusted accordingly is with the 'Try It' workshops, the content of which has been altered and adapted in response to feedback from attendees.

In order to support the widening access aims of the College, the College has several strategic committees including the Student Experience and Widening Participation Committee, the Fees Bursaries and Scholarships Committee, the Equalities Committee, the Disability Committee, the Recruitment Monitoring Group and collaborative Birkbeck-UEL groups overseeing set-up the new joint teaching facility at Stratford. The Widening Access and Retention team, working with recruitment, student support and planning teams, are represented and active in these bodies.

## **Institutional Partnership Agreement**

The College recently created a new strategic role, Pro-Vice-Master for Academic Partnerships, with the goal of strengthening ties with partner institutions in order to ensure that progression opportunities are improved for students in further education. The role includes exploring new curriculum developments in conjunction with further education partner institutions, and ensuring that progression routes are simplified for students from further education. As a result of the new role, Birkbeck has created an Institutional Partnership Agreement (IPA) for students entering in 2013/14 that guarantees an offer at Birkbeck for any student from a partner institution who successfully completes a Level 3 qualification.

The need for the IPA was identified by the evaluation of our work with FECs, which demonstrated a lack of awareness and knowledge of Birkbeck as an institution and the flexible alternative model of HE study we offer. There is a natural relationship between Birkbeck and the student body of FECs, and the early signs demonstrate that adopting a more strategic approach to our work with FECs is benefitting an increasing number of students. The impact of the IPA will be reviewed and evaluated annually to account for the number of students who apply through the IPA, the number who are offered a place and the number who go on to enrol. We will also monitor the retention and success of this group of students in comparison to the general

student body, and work with partners to help ensure that students are well prepared for HE study.

### **Retention Strategy**

Birkbeck's retention strategy was established in 2010 by the PVM for Student Experience and the PVM for Teaching and Learning. The strategy focuses on the undergraduate degree student journey from first point of contact to transition into the second year, as this is the period in which we identified the greatest risk of withdrawal. The retention strategy confirms Birkbeck's strong commitment to recruiting and maintaining a socially and culturally diverse student population. The Retention Strategy Steering Group oversees efforts to improve progression and completion rates across the institution for first-year undergraduate students, aiming to improve year one retention by 20% by 2014.

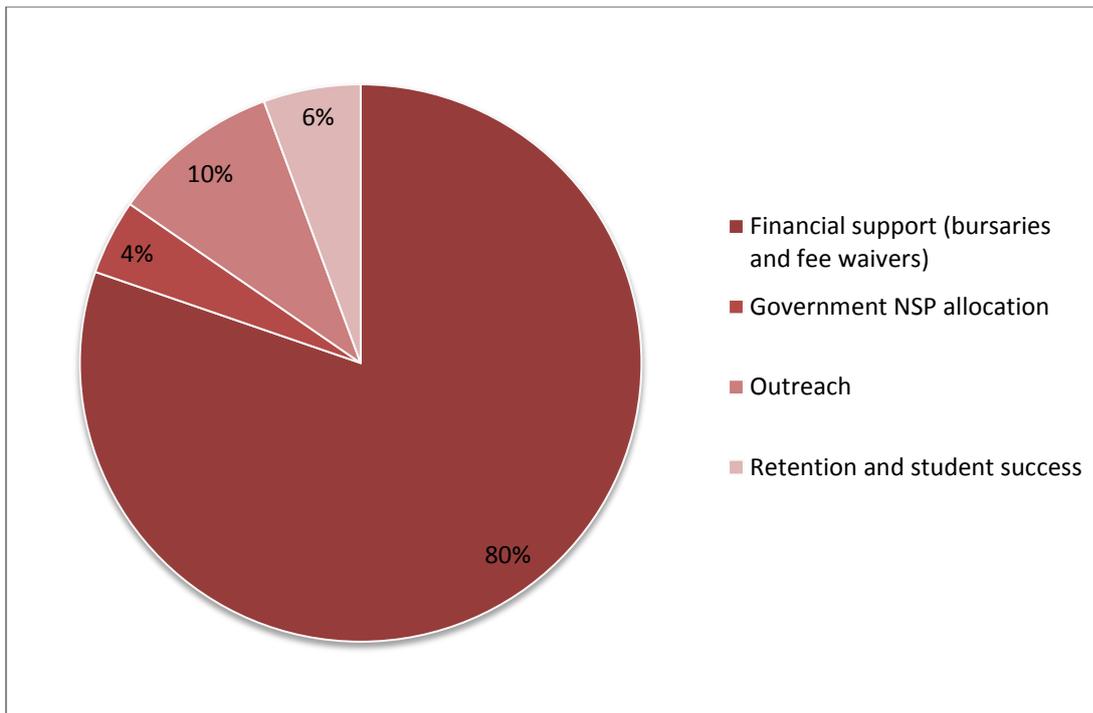
The improvements in the retention statistics outlined in Section 3.2 validate the approach of the College's retention strategy. The importance that our outreach work places on high-quality and accessible pre-entry IAG and support also contributes to the retention goals as we aim to ensure that students are well prepared for higher education, are equipped to make good choices, and to succeed.

### **3.4 Birkbeck's expenditure on access and student success measures**

Birkbeck's expenditure on access and student success measures shows that we will spend over half of our additional fee income on financial support, outreach and student success in 2014/15, above the percentage recommended by OFFA. We are spending such a significant proportion not to address previous poor results in access or student success, but rather due to our particular student body which has been significantly impacted by the 2012/13 increase in fees and our determination to ensure that higher education remains as accessible as possible to non-traditional students.

The breakdown of our spending outlined in Figure 1 shows that we have committed 84% of our access and success expenditure towards fees and bursaries, a higher percentage than the average across the sector. We therefore spent a slightly smaller percentage, but still a significant amount, on our outreach and student success activities.

**Figure 1: Birkbeck's access agreement expenditure in 2014-5 by type of spend (amended in December 2013)**



The reason for the divide of spend is that we believe that the financial support that we have provided to students has impacted on their decisions to apply and enrol. Our analysis suggests that the proportion of students from the lowest income bands eligible for the financial support increased in 2012/13. The research shows that 42% of students questioned stated that bursaries were very important in their decision to enrol at Birkbeck. In response, and due also to the national downturn in part-time student applications, for 2014-15 we are increasing rather than decreasing the household income eligibility criteria for financial support.

We remain committed too to running a significant outreach programme and spending on outreach has increased in this access agreement. As a result of evidence that our prospective students lack access to high quality IAG, we focus our outreach on filling the gap, and we are expanding our outreach activities in two main ways. Firstly, we are investing heavily in a new pre-entry IAG service focussed on mature students in collaboration with UEL which will provide high quality impartial advice to prospective students as set out in more detail in Section 3.6.1. Secondly, we are planning to focus more in our work with Sixth Forms and other groups with the goal of raising awareness of our new three-year evening teaching model.

### 3.5 Examples of Birkbeck’s access and retention activities

Our outreach strategy is focussed on opening up the possibility of higher education to adults who would otherwise not be aware of the options available to them, or who would not be able to easily study on a programme delivered during the daytime. While students who are currently in education have access to information and advice regarding returning career development and education, adults who may not have been in education for a number of years often do not have adequate access to the information that would enable them to make informed decisions. Indeed, our own research with our applicants in 2012/13 showed that 80% of part-time students rely on Birkbeck for the majority of their information on higher education, whereas

80% of full-time students received their information through sector-wide sources such as UCAS. This demonstrates the importance of accessible and high-quality advice provided by us.

Our access work is focussed on providing this information and support. We also believe that accurate pre-entry IAG has a crucial role in improving retention rates as more students will be clearer about their educational and career goals, and be well prepared for the challenges that they will confront during their studies.

The fact that our main outreach work involves reaching out to mature learners from under-represented groups means that the work of the team has to be innovative and creative. While we are increasingly working with Sixth-Form Colleges, the majority of Birkbeck's prospective students are not sitting in a classroom environment, which makes long-term engagement more difficult. The team have worked hard to understand the needs of prospective students from WP backgrounds who may particularly benefit from evening study, and have developed key projects and partnerships to raise awareness of the option of full-time and part-time evening higher education among WP groups.

### **3.5.1 Examples of our access activities**

#### ***Try It workshops***

We devised the weekly 'Try It' workshops to ensure that all prospective students, within a week of initially making contact with Birkbeck, are given an opportunity to come onto campus to receive support and guidance on a particular topic related to returning to education. Appendix 1 provides a visual overview of the sessions, with the pre-entry workshops in light blue and post-entry in the darker blue.

A particular strength of the Try It workshops is that they are open to all prospective students. One purpose of the workshops is to provide an accurate reflection of what studying at Birkbeck will be like and so ideally each workshop will include attendees from a wide variety of backgrounds. Our evaluation shows that in 2012/13, 40% of those who attended a workshop did not have a previous Level 3 qualification and can therefore be classed as non-traditional students. 37% had no family members who have studied at university, and the average age of attendees was 36. Almost half of attendees at the workshops went on to successfully enrol at Birkbeck.

We are seeking to expand this area of work, for example through offering the workshops at different locations, particularly working in partnership with organisations who target non-traditional students, as we are determined to ensure that prospective students have access to the best pre-entry advice possible.

#### ***Get Talking***

The 'Get Talking' project is an opportunity for prospective students to meet recent graduates to discuss their experiences of studying at Birkbeck. The sessions have been extremely successful in giving prospective students confidence and an opportunity to ask questions that they would otherwise not be able to get answers to. The impact of this project is shown by the fact that during its pilot phase 67% of students who took part in the project went on to successfully enrol at Birkbeck. We will expand this project over the coming years.

### **Pre-entry IAG and careers interviews**

Findings from the Back on Course Research into early leavers demonstrated 'wrong course choice' was a major reason for withdrawing from study<sup>1</sup>. In response to the lack of IAG accessible by mature and non-traditional entrants, Birkbeck have invested heavily in a pre-entry IAG service in Stratford as outlined in greater detail in Section 3.6.1. We have also increased the pre-entry careers provision available at our central London campus and now offer pre-entry one-to-one career interviews for prospective students. The importance of pre-entry support to prospective students is demonstrated by high demand for this service.

### **The role of Certificates of Higher Education in widening access**

The College has established a range of 'getting started' programmes that reach out to the most disadvantaged and non-traditional learners, wherever they are in London, and create bridges that enable them to aspire to a university degree. In particular, the College's Higher Education Introductory Studies (HEIS) programme acts as an access-type programme with significant support built into the curriculum. Success on these programmes often leads students directly into the second year of an undergraduate degree programme. No previous qualification is required for entry onto HEIS certificates and they provide an accessible and supported way to enter higher education for those who may not be ready to start an undergraduate degree immediately.

Since 2007, HEIS has been successfully delivered on-site in Sure Start Children's Centres in east London. By offering this provision through partners who work with disadvantaged groups, the College provides the opportunity for new learners, who have family responsibilities, to take a step forward into learning in their own communities. Under the previous fee structure, over 90% of students who take HEIS modules in these centres were eligible for financial support to pay their fees because they were in receipt of benefits or on low incomes. The new fees have led to a drop in demand for these introductory courses. In 2012/13 and 2013/14 the College has committed £57,000 annually to providing full bursaries for 30 students studying at the Children's Centres, and the impact of these bursaries will continue to be evaluated.

The certificates are very successful examples of the types of entry years that Alan Milburn promotes in his 2012 *University Challenge* report as an effective means of promoting social mobility, providing new routes into higher education. We are offering the certificates on a much lower fee than our UG degree provision in order to encourage those students who may be most debt-adverse and have the lowest confidence. The certificates have generated new students for the College and opened up access to university in ways consistent with the College's history and mission. Through the Certificates of Higher Education, adults who might otherwise be excluded from higher education participation are finding their way onto degree programmes. Birkbeck will continue and expand our provision of these programmes where possible.

### **Learning Cafés**

To support application to the HEIS certificates, the Widening Access and Retention team have worked with academic colleagues to develop the 'Learning Café' project, which offers informal and unaccredited sessions in community settings, including at Sure Start Children's Centres and primary schools. We work with the partner organisations to target people locally who have little

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<sup>1</sup> Back On Course, (2012); *Leaving University Early, a Research Project from the back on course project*, HEFCE

confidence in their ability to succeed educationally. Attendees who wish to progress onto formal learning will be able to enrol onto the accredited Higher Education Introductory Studies programmes.

### ***Working with FE Colleges***

To go alongside the strategic developments to strengthen our partnerships with further education colleges (Section 3.3), we work closely with a number of colleges to ensure that both the staff and students are aware of the options for progression to higher education. The colleges we work with are inner-London FE colleges, and have high proportion of students from groups under-represented in HE. The targets that we have set demonstrate our commitment to building this area of work year-on-year.

### ***Trade Union members***

We have developed a strategic partnership with unionlearn with the aim of targeting low-paid workers with no previous experience of HE and to encourage them to progress to HE. Birkbeck offers a 10% fee discount to these entrants, with 126 members taking advantage in 2012/13 on undergraduate programmes, a total cost of £41,730 in undergraduate fee waivers. To support the unionlearn discount, a substantial programme of events is run throughout the year, working through unionlearn representatives to reach the greatest number of individuals working in particular sectors. The unions that have the greatest number of enrolments taking advantage of the unionlearn discount are UNISON, Unite and GMB.

### ***First point of contact***

The outreach team raise awareness of higher education in particularly among mature students by giving bespoke information talks to community groups, and having a presence in public areas such as shopping centres and libraries. It is difficult to accurately target or evaluate these events in terms of outcomes, as they focus on raising awareness rather than providing significant content, but we do believe that they are important in making the university more accessible to people who have not previously considered higher education as a viable option for them.

### ***Informing the informers***

To underpin all the areas of work outlined in this section, we run a series of events aimed at ensuring that we keep informers and staff in various organisations and sectors aware of the opportunities that higher education offers. As well as working with staff in FE and Sixth-Form colleges, we work closely with unionlearn representatives and staff working in a range of community organisations so that we can reach people who would not otherwise approach educational institutions. In response to a decrease in employer sponsorship for part-time students we are increasing our work with employers in order to communicate the benefits for them of their employees updating their skills and expertise through higher education.

### ***IntoUniversity***

We work with IntoUniversity, an educational charity who work with schools with high percentage of students on free school meals, to raise their educational aspirations. We are pleased to open our campus to groups of primary school children, and are exploring ways of working in closer collaboration with IntoUniversity, particularly as we further develop our three-year evening programmes which tend to be more attractive to younger students. We also work with the parents of the children to ensure that they too are made aware of the opportunities that are open to them as mature learners.

### **3.5.2 Examples of post entry activities**

Birkbeck's retention work focuses on the undergraduate degree student journey from first point of contact to transition into the second year. Retention work has engaged many staff across the institution, both in academic schools and in the professional services.

The next phase of our retention strategy will continue to develop, integrate and embed work across the College focusing on three key strands:

- supporting the transition to study for year one undergraduate students, as research shows that pre-entry is a time when retention work can be most effective
- raising awareness and enhancing the understanding of effective pedagogies for first-year undergraduates
- embedding and enhancing the development of learning support in the institution, its schools and departments.

Since 2008 the College has convened a Recruitment Monitoring Group, and a Retention Strategy Group with a Retention Operations sub-group was established in 2010. These cross-College, integrated groups, working with the Widening Access and Retention team, help ensure the effective, coherent delivery of recruitment and retention work.

#### ***Pedagogy***

The College recognises that for widening access to be sustained and embedded it needs to ensure the ongoing development of inclusive curricula and learning and teaching practices. This is a particular focus for first-year provision. The College has developed 'Introductions' modules that are specifically designed to encourage new learners to become active, critical enquirers into their own learning experiences and into how these experiences have been affected by the circumstances of their lives, past and present. The identities and the experiences that learners bring with them to the College are, therefore, actively drawn upon as a resource for learning and teaching. These modules are also designed to provide insights into the evolving, sometimes contested, cultures and conventions of the British HE system and to debates about what constitutes 'knowledge' in students' broad disciplinary field of interest. This provides the stimulus for students to begin to practise the kinds of critical, inquiry-led learning processes prioritised in HE, while they are supported to develop the kinds of written, oral and applied computer skills needed for successful undergraduate study. Where students are keen to link their studies to the achievement of new employment opportunities, these modules also provide structured career-related learning materials.

Work in critical pedagogy is embedded within the institution and the College works both to enhance pedagogic approaches for its learners, and to develop critical approaches to learning for practitioners and professionals.

#### ***Learning support***

Learning Support Officers (LSOs) are placed within each School in order to assist students during their studies. The LSOs' focus is on the first year undergraduate, where the greatest risk of withdrawal has been identified, but they also work throughout the student lifecycle. The work of the LSOs is critical to the College's retention activities and the improved retention statistics demonstrate their success.

To improve the visibility of the sessions to support retention and success, an integrated calendar for all academic workshops has been launched on the student website homepage. Students can now see at a glance all the workshops available to them, organised centrally and through their School. The calendar was developed in response to feedback that information about workshops was not always immediately visible to students. Since the development of the new system, attendance at workshops has increased substantially and staff are now able to collate data about attendees for use in developing future sessions.

### ***'Get Ahead Stay Ahead' activities***

We offer a series of workshops under the heading of 'Get Ahead: Stay Ahead'. The 'Get Ahead' summer programme of workshops prepare applicants for study, alongside associated online tutorials. While on their course, a series of sessions are timetabled at key trigger points in the student lifecycle and focus on empowering learners by building confidence and self-esteem. Students are encouraged to attend orientation events in September, followed by 'Stay Ahead' events which are designed to provide pastoral support focusing on improving motivation, encouraging growth mindsets and fostering collaborative learning.

### ***East London Business Alliance (ELBA)***

The Widening Access and Retention team has worked with ELBA at identifying opportunities for Birkbeck students to gain insight into the professional world. ELBA brokered a relationship with Barclays, who set up professional mentoring for law students. The first sessions were available in May 2012 and continue to date, with three sessions in the spring term of 2013. In addition, ELBA offered Stratford-based students a chance to attend employability based sessions in east London organisations.

As our students struggle to attend further evening sessions elsewhere, the Widening Access and Retention team joined up with our alumni team and the Students' Union as well as ELBA to roll out a series of sector- and School-specific talks focused on changing career and entrepreneurial skills. The first two talks were very well attended and interest amongst students was high.

### ***Student Union activities***

The Student Union are piloting a range of initiatives that will support the access and retention of students that are focused on the creation of engagement, personal development and provision of opportunities to participate:

- An increased presence at Open Evening by the SU to support students' pre-entry journey
- Re-organising the model of student clubs and societies to make it fit for part-time and mature students. The changes so far have led to an increase of active societies from 10 to over 30 and anticipate further increased during 2013/14. These activities will support access and retention for students.
- Taking the Curriculum out of the Classroom: The mystery of the curriculum in many courses being quite unknown to most new or potential students, we are proposing a number of stunts, broadcasts, events and social gatherings to give a novel approach to course tasters. Funding has also been secured for the Students' Union to run a series of street experiments akin to maths or science 'busking', promoting Birkbeck and our courses/research to local communities in non-traditional spaces, such as shopping centres.

- Providing information and advice content through webinars and podcasts, in collaboration with the National Union of Students as part of their “Pound in your Pocket” research findings.
- Campus Tours and Chaperoning: the SU will be recruiting student volunteers to run campus tours and providing a first term ‘chaperoning’ service. This will help build a stronger community and support network in the student body at Birkbeck, and so support retention and student success.

## **3.6 Collaborative activities**

### **3.6.1 University Square Stratford – collaboration with UEL**

University Square Stratford (USS) is a major widening access initiative for Birkbeck, which will open its doors in 2013. The College committed to take our provision to east London in 2007, and has since been working closely with UEL to ensure that we work in partnership with existing providers in order to be able to widen the provision available in east London as much as possible. The decision to open a new centre in Stratford was due to the low participation rates in east London and the knowledge that our particular provision of evening study would enable people to benefit from HE who would otherwise not be able to study.

At the heart of USS is a collaborative Birkbeck-UEL pre-entry IAG service that is open to prospective students of both institutions and indeed to members of the public in general. The IAG service is a truly innovative provision between the two universities that will provide a visible, accessible and impartial service to the local population. We hope that the service will provide individual IAG interviews to 2000 prospective students in its first full year of operation, rising to 2200 by 2014/15, supporting applications to appropriate programmes at both institutions, as well as signposting to other local providers.

As well as the initial IAG service, the building will play host to a comprehensive series of pre- and post-entry support activities to ensure that students from both institutions receive the support they need to succeed in their studies.

Birkbeck expects to commit £60,000 to the IAG service in 2014/15 as our share of the running costs. The provision can therefore be seen to be a substantial investment in ensuring that our students receive the most comprehensive pre-entry support possible.

Measurements of the IAG service’s success will include an analysis of those given an IAG interview in terms of their enrolment to application rates, retention rates and their profile. The service will be evaluated through the monitoring systems at both institutions, with regular ongoing management meetings between the two institutions to ensure that lessons are shared.

### **3.6.2 Linking London**

Birkbeck hosts the Linking London network, a unique collection of partners from small adult-focused organisations to large multi-purpose further education colleges and research-intensive universities. As a large and diverse partnership of educational providers, we are strategically positioned to encourage and support change aimed at improving progression opportunities for learners under-represented in higher education.

One of our initiatives with Linking London will be to work in collaboration with other HEIs to deliver advice and information sessions to FE colleges and Sixth-Form Colleges in order to encourage successful applications from students with a variety of qualifications. We will also work with Linking London to ensure that advisors within colleges and schools are aware of the relevant information that they need in order to pass it onto the students they advise within their institutions.

### **3.6.3 University College London - collaborative mature student event**

We will continue to work with UCL to develop an information event in October 2013 for mature students, primarily targeted at Access to HE Diploma students. The event will give attendees a taste of being an undergraduate student at two research-intensive universities with different teaching models. Relevant data regarding application and enrolment rates will be shared.

### **3.6.4 OCN London and OCN Eastern Region**

We work with OCN London in order to strengthen our work with FE colleges within the London and Eastern regions, to ensure that FE students progress to higher education equipped with the skills, attributes and attitudes that will enable them to flourish throughout their undergraduate course.

## **3.7 Student Financial Support**

For new entrants in 2014/15 we intend to continue to offer a similar package of support as was offered to our new entrants in 2013/14 and in 2012/13. A combination of fee waivers from the National Scholarship programme and a very generous cash bursary scheme will be directed to students on low incomes. These will be offered alongside our other schemes of financial support including hardship funding and access to learning funds.

Despite the announcement in November 2013 that our NSP allocation will be slashed to from £654,000 to £218,000 the College will honour the student financial support commitments made in our access agreement, and subsequently widely advertised to prospective students. The in-year reduction could have severely impacted applicants' ability to enrol at Birkbeck, and so keeping to the original amounts underlines the College's determination to support the students most in need. However, the significant unforeseen additional expenditure now faced by the College will unavoidably impact other student directed provision in future years.

### **3.7.1 Institutional contribution to the National Scholarship Programme**

We will continue with our National Scholarship Programme (NSP) scheme, for students on programmes with fees of £6000 and above and with a household income of £20,000 or lower, consisting of a fee waiver of £3000 over the first 120 credits of study.

When the National Scholarship Programme (NSP) was first introduced in 2012/13 we received a much larger number of low income students who were eligible for the scheme than we anticipated. In 2012/13 we expected to match the Government's contribution of £240,000 but we eventually spent over £1M to support approximately 600 students, rather than close the scheme. Due to the most recent reduction, in 2014/15, we expect to receive a Government allocation of £218,000 for the NSP and we will provide our required match funding of £726,000, plus additional funding of around £856,000 for a total of up to £1.8M to be spent on NSP for new entrants in 2014/15. This additional College funding will ensure we are able to offer fee waivers to the large majority of eligible students.

We have a large number of students eligible for NSP even though the scheme has a low threshold of household income of less than £20,000. Given this, we were disappointed that our government allocations for 2013/14 and 2014/15 have both been reduced compared to the original provisional allocations (£483,000 to £393,000 in 2013/14 and £726,000 to £654,000 in 2014/15 – which has recently been further reduced in-year to £218,000). Despite the several reductions faced, we will aim to continue to make our fee waiver available to all students who meet the criteria if funds permit.

The NSP guidelines state that the government's allocation of funding should only be used to finance a fee waiver for the first year of a student's programme. This restriction puts part-time students at a disadvantage as they would receive a fee waiver for 30, 60 or 90 credits whereas full-time students receive a fee waiver for 120 credits. We believe it is important to ensure the equal treatment of part-time students, therefore we intend to continue to allocate part of our institutional contribution across later years for part-time students to ensure that fee waivers of £3000 are applied for the first 120 credits of study on all programmes that qualify for the scheme. To illustrate, eligible three-year degree students will receive the fee waiver of £3000 in their first year, four year degree students will receive a fee waiver £2250 in their first year and £750 in the 2nd year, and six year degree students will receive a fee waiver of £1500 in both the first year and second years.

Awards will also be ring fenced for students on low income who are progressing from one of our partner FE Colleges and also for low income disabled students.

We will also be operating a full fee waiver scheme worth £57,000 for up to 30 students on our community centre based Higher Education Introductory Studies Programme, at two selected centres in east London. In addition we will run our unionlearn scheme, for 10% fee waivers for students referred by trade Union education officers, worth an estimated £100,000 per year for undergraduate students.

### **3.7.2 Fee waivers, bursaries and scholarships for new students**

Feedback from our students and Students' Union suggests that cash bursary awards are valued highly, as this offers a choice in how best financial support can be utilised to support their individual day-to-day costs of learning. Therefore we intend to extend our very generous cash bursary scheme for 2014/15 entrants.

We will allocate £1.3M of College funding in 2014/15 on cash bursaries, to be used by recipients to fund their costs of learning, which may include equipment, books, travel and childcare, or as partial payment against fees.

The scheme is:

- For students with incomes lower than £25,000, awards of £1000 for students on three year degrees, £750 for students on four year degrees and £500 for students on six year degrees.
- For degree students with incomes between £25,000 and £35,000, awards of £800 for students on three year degrees, £600 for students on four year degrees and £400 for students on six year degrees.
- These extended bursary awards will be available to new students in 2014/15 and it is expected to be awarded to 1300 students, as funds allow.

### **3.7.3 Fee waivers, bursaries and scholarships for continuing students**

We believe that students who need financial support need it throughout their course, not just in the first year. We are planning, as far as funds allow, to offer continuing students the same cash bursary scheme as in the year they first enrolled, providing they are still eligible in terms of household income. We will therefore continue the cash bursary scheme offered to new entrants in 2012/13 and 2013/14 which consists of awards of £1000 pro-rata to FTE (i.e. £1000 for 120 credits study) to approximately 2000 students whose household income is below £25,000.

We will continue to operate an extremely generous bursary system for the remaining old system part-time students as students work their way through the system. Part-time students who started their studies prior to 2012/2013 are eligible for part-time grant of up to £1285 per annum for which they are means tested by Student Finance England. Our bursary scheme aims to 'top up' recipients of the part-time grant to the level of the College's part-time fee. In the last full year of old regime in 2011/12 we funded over 2000 students and spent in excess of £2.2M. In 2014/15 we expect to fund approximately 500 students and spend approximately £700,000. We fund this scheme from a combination of College, donor and Government Access to Learning funding.

Alongside the main schemes of fee waiver and bursary support outlined here, we also will continue to maintain a number of other financial support schemes that we offer for our students.

- **Hardship Fund** – In 2012/13 we introduced a new hardship fund available to all students who experience a change in circumstances during their studies to provide financial support towards the costs of their course. The hardship fund in 2014/15 is expected to be circa £250,000.
- **College Awards Fund** – A fund for discretionary payments to old system students who face hardship due to change of circumstance to provide financial support towards fees, maintenance and course costs, circa £100,000.
- **Donor Funding** – We will continue to seek donor funding to supplement our student financial support, which will be aimed at students from low-income backgrounds. For example, several donations were received in 2012/13 and 2013/14 to help fund the Birkbeck Cash Bursary scheme and a large donation was given for an additional fee waiver for students in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology.
- **Access to Learning Fund** - Distribution of any available Government-allocated funds from the Access to Learning Fund in supporting course costs for part-time students on low incomes and as top-up payments to students in receipt of the part-time grant. Expected to be circa £300,000.

## **4. Targets and milestones, monitoring and evaluation**

### **4.1 Targets and milestones**

In response to the new guidance on creating the access agreement, we have changed some of our targets and milestones so that they are more statistically robust and outcome-focussed. As we are now offering a much more substantial number of full-time three-year evening programmes, new targets have also been introduced in order for us to analyse the differences

between the study modes that we offer. The targets and milestones will continue to be monitored through the Student Experience and Widening Participation Committee.

Within the access agreement we have identified areas where we are weaker in terms of access and student success, and our targets address these areas as well as demonstrating our determination to continue to improve existing areas of strength. Some areas where we are weaker as an institution, such as failing to reach benchmark levels in terms of access for full-time students from state schools, relate specifically to our new full-time three-year evening programmes. We are therefore keen to ensure that any issues are identified early on so they can be addressed appropriately. Other targets relate to the financial standing of students, but the changes in the student financial system have led to substantial and ongoing changes of behaviour, particularly among part-time students. Therefore, a number of targets are developmental in nature and are may need to be re-evaluated over time as our experience grows and new patterns of student behaviour become apparent. The targets that we have set are challenging, measurable and show a determination to ensure that Birkbeck continues its historical mission to ensure that the benefits of higher education are opened as widely as possible.

## **4.2 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements**

Progress towards milestones will be monitored using College Management Information Systems, reviewed annually by the Student Experience and Widening Participation Committee, which has representation from the Student Union, and reported through Academic Board to the governing body.

## **5. Equality and Diversity**

As part of Birkbeck's long tradition of equity and access we are committed to equality of opportunity for all. The College is committed to maintaining the ethnicity profile of the student body that reflects the population of London, and of maintaining the increased number of disabled students as a proportion of the student body. Equality and diversity is an integral part of Birkbeck's practices and is embedded in all that we do. We have strived to build an enabling environment free from prejudice, discrimination and harassment by supporting the diverse and cultural needs of all staff and students through a range of activities as outlined in the College's Single Equality Strategy. The strategy is a high-level action plan that focuses on the following themes: 'Birkbeck as an Employer', the 'Student Experience' and 'Corporate Affairs', and will capture the College's aspirations and commitment to deliver on our equality commitments, aims and objectives.

An Equality Impact Assessment of the access agreement has been undertaken. The agreement has been assessed as having a potentially positive impact on the equalities in terms of race/ethnicity, disability and age-protected characteristics, and a neutral impact on all other protected characteristics.

The impact of the College's recruitment and retention activities are captured through the College's Equality Strategy and supporting implementation plan which is monitored and reported on a regular basis at the Equalities Committee. The Head of Widening Access and Retention is represented on the Equalities Committee and the Disabilities Committee in order

to ensure the sharing of information and particular areas of work through relevant College structures.

## **6. Provision of information to prospective students**

Our research with our applicants in 2012/13 has shown that the majority of mature students rely on Birkbeck's own information channels for the majority of their information on higher education. This is true for course information, career advice and for financial information relevant to studying. It is therefore imperative that we provide accurate and thorough information to students.

We will provide information for our 2014/15 programmes, together with the financial support that we have available, as clearly and as timely as possible. As well as the mainstream methods of communication through our website and prospectus, we will work with partners to ensure that they are aware of the financial support available as soon in the application cycle as possible. Our substantial pre-entry IAG provision, outlined earlier in this document in Sections 3.5.1 and Section 3.6.1, will be a key way to ensure that students not only have access to the information, but also have the opportunity to discuss that information with a member of staff.

Since the changes to the student financial system, we have invested heavily in explaining the new systems to prospective students. We believe that there has been a lack of high-quality, accessible information targeted at the mature and part-time audiences, with the vast majority of communications for the HE sector being targeted at younger students and their parents. Benchmarking shows that our advertising and recruitment spending is higher than other HE institutions and this is because the majority of our students are recruited directly rather than via UCAS. In order to ensure that mature students are aware of the options available to them, the Government and the sector need to work together to ensure messages are well understood by adults with no previous higher education experience, and that the part-time and mature students are seen as equally deserving of attention in future.

We were very disappointed by the recent announcement of substantial in-year reduction in our NSP allocation as it put our advertised student financial support in jeopardy. The College has taken the decision to make up the shortfall due to the in-year reduction so that students will still be able to claim the amounts originally outlined in the access agreement. Our commitment demonstrates our belief that consistent and correct IAG is a crucial part of working with prospective students, especially those who most rely on financial support.

## **7. Consulting with students**

The College's Strategic Planning Committee commissioned market research in order to gather the feedback of students and prospective students on the College's IAG and financial support offering and the impact of the support on recruitment. This research was an excellent opportunity to consult with our student body and gather their reaction to the changing fees, financial support and the information sources that they accessed.

The research suggests that the financial support offered was widely appreciated among those eligible, and that the proportion of students from the lowest income bands increased in 2012/13. The research suggests that the students with the lowest incomes are the ones who

have the most to gain financially from achieving a higher education qualification whereas those with middle incomes may be more reluctant due to the repayment they would expect to pay on graduation. This finding suggests that our significant financial support has impacted on students' decision making for those eligible for the support.

45% of the three-year full-time degree students questioned stated that bursaries were very important to their decision-making process, compared to 37% among four-year part-time students. Feedback from the Students' Union has also confirmed that students would prefer financial bursaries. In response to this, for 2014/15 the bursary scheme for new degree students will be enhanced with support available for those with household incomes of up to £35,000.

The research showed that 80% of Birkbeck's part-time students accessed information on all aspects of the pre-entry journey through Birkbeck's own information channels. This contrasts significantly with students who applied through UCAS, who mainly found their IAG information through other channels, with 20% primarily depending on Birkbeck's resources. These findings demonstrate the importance of our own information channels for prospective students, in particular for the part-time cohort who are predominantly mature students.

The impact of the student voice in the College's decision-making is demonstrated by the introduction of a Hardship Fund in 2012/13, in direct response to the Students' Union's request. The fund consists of £250,000 that the College has made available to support students who face particularly difficult and unforeseen circumstances.

The Students' Union are represented on the Student Experience and Widening Participation Committee, the body that reviews the College's access agreements and Widening Participation Strategic Statement. Students are also represented on Governors and Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings, where the new fees and bursaries and the related impact on the access agreement have been discussed.

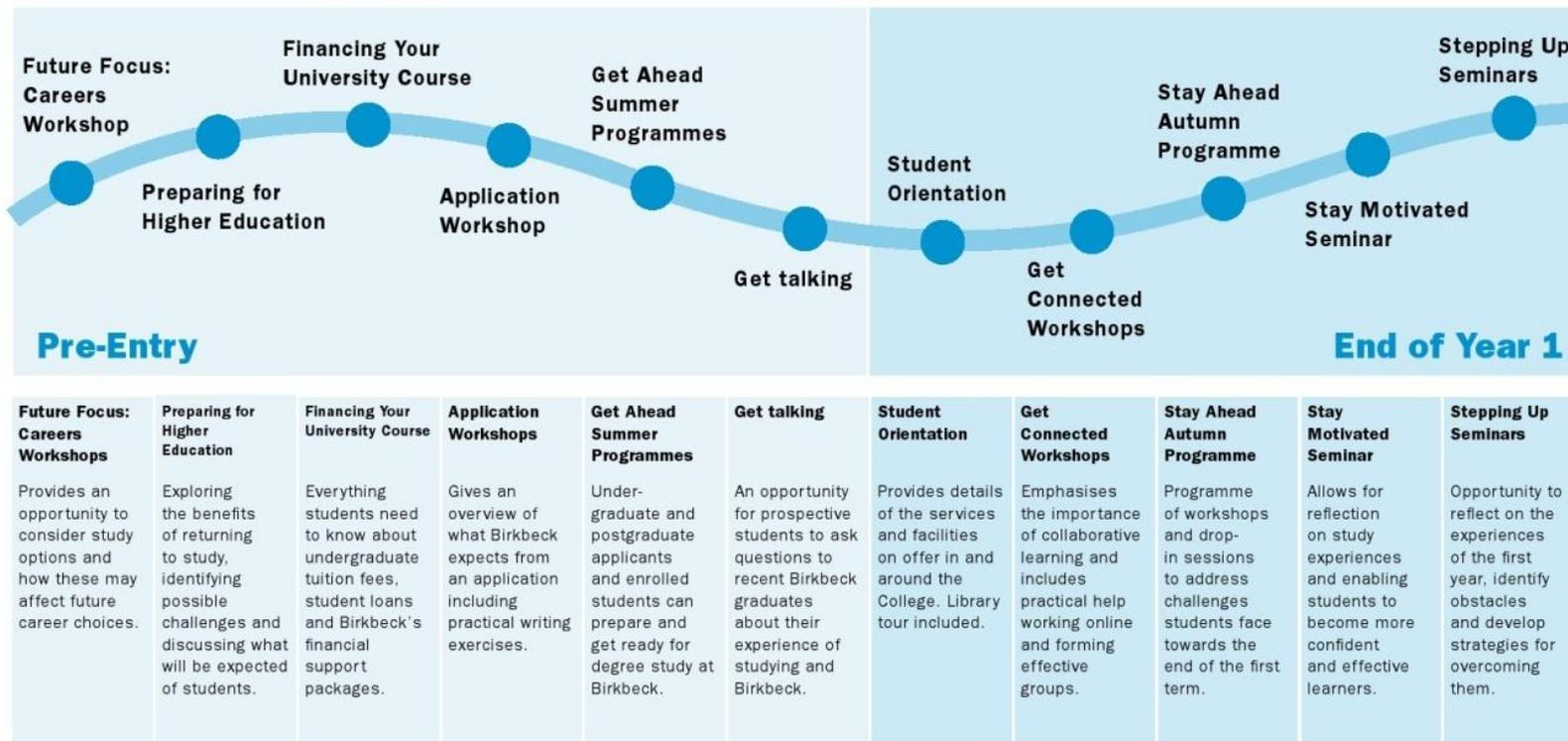
Our consultation with the Students' Union has emphasised the need for clear and transparent information regarding financial support offered to students. The structure of the financial support we have in place ensures that the support is as simple as it can be, with just a single eligibility criterion. We believe that we offer among the most generous financial support of any HEI and are proud to be committing this level of financial support to those who most need the support.

The College have worked with the Students' Union to review and adapt our offering of student support sessions, for example through working together to deliver additional career workshops for current students. Similarly, we actively seek and act upon student feedback for all our pre- and post-entry student support sessions.

## Appendix 1: Overview of Birkbeck's access and retention activities



# Widening Access and Retention Events



[www.bbk.ac.uk/tryit](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/tryit)

OFFA Access Agreement 2014/15 - Annexes B & C

Institution name: Birkbeck College  
Institution UKPRN: 10007760

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)

Number	Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	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	2017-18	
1	Location (other measure - please give details in the next column)	Continue with outreach work in low HE participation boroughs of East London and maintain current percentage of students from these areas	No	2009-10	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	14%	% of entrants
2	Disabled	Maintain or increase number of disabled students (Table 7)	No	2009-10	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	Baseline HESA data; % of student body
3	Ethnicity	Maintain an ethnically diverse student body reflecting the population of London; measured by percentage of black and ethnic minority students	No	2009-10	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	Baseline HESA data; % of student body
4	Completion/Non continuation (other - please give details in the next column)	Non-continuation 2 years following year of entry - part-time first degree entrants - Table 3e	No	2011-12	28.8%	26.9%	25.0%	25.0%	23.0%	23.0%	23.0%	In order to better analyse full-time and part-time retention rates we have established separate targets
5	Non continuation: Young (HESA Table T3a)	Non-continuation following year of entry - full-time first degree entrants (Table T3a all ages)	No	2011-12	9.2%	8.6%	8.0%	8.0%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	In order to better analyse full-time and part-time retention rates we have established separate targets. The number of full-time students in 2011/12 is very low therefore significant changes are possible until we reach a steady state of student numbers
6	Socio-economic (other measure - please give details in the next column)	To maintain the percentage of part-time students with household income under £25,000. Figures based on internal data of % of students claiming financial support due to hhold income below £25,000	No	2012-13	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%	37%	The new financial system makes forecasting future student behaviour difficult. Eligibility criteria may rise alongside any future inflationary fee increase
7	Socio-economic (other measure - please give details in the next column)	To maintain the percentage of full-time students with household income under £25,000. Figures based on internal data of % of students claiming financial support due to hhold income below £25,000	No	2012-13	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%	The new financial system makes forecasting future student behaviour difficult. Eligibility criteria may rise alongside any future inflationary fee increase
8	State School (HESA Table T1a)	Increase the proportion of full-time students from state schools studying full-time to our location adjusted benchmark	No	2011-12	77.4%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	Target may change alongside our location adjusted benchmark. The number of full-time studnets in 2011/12 is very low (55) therefore significant changes are possible until we reach a steady state of student numbers

**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.

Number	Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	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	2017-18	
1	Contextual data	The percentage of part-time UG studnets who enrol with non-traditional qualifications	No	2010/11	2683 headcount, 38% of total UG population	Increase by 1%	Increase by 1%	Increase by 1%	Increase by 1%	Increase by 1%		Most HEIs consider A Levels the primary route into HE. At Birkbeck we encourage those with non-traditional level 3 and below to take up study with us. This reflects our mission and is compatible with our outreach work and activities.
2	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Increase the number and percentage of students who enrol onto a Birkbeck programme through our Learning Cafes outreach project	No	2011/12	13 (33%)	20 (40%)	32 (40%)	44 (40%)	44 (40%)	44 (40%)	44 (40%)	Delivered with local partners, a series of free, informal subject taster sessions aimed at raising adults' aspirations and understanding of HE study. At the end participants will be signposted and supported to accredited progression routes.
3	Strategic partnerships (eg formal relationships with schools/colleges/employers)	UnionLearn - 10% discount to unionlearn members as part of memorandum of understanding with unionlearn. Target relates to number of UG students the discount was granted to.	No	2011/12	37	126	150	150	150	150	150	Birkbeck signed a memorandum of understanding in 2010 with UnionLearn to offer a 10% discount across all levels of study to union members looking to develop their skills
4	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Number of students who attend a Try It workshop and percentage who successfully enrol	No	2011/12	356 (46%)	500 (50%)	500 (50%)	500 (50%)	500 (50%)	500 (50%)	500 (50%)	This programme supports prospective students step by step over a number of weeks to build up their confidence and awareness of returning to study and then life as a student. Aim to attract 600 attendees with 50% going on to successfully enrol
5	Student support services	Get Ahead: Stay Ahead interactive study skills and student support website. Grow and develop further online material to increase number of users. Target relates to page hits.	No	2011/12	75000	75000	75000	75000	75000	75000	75000	This is a brand new website that is one strand of the College's first retention strategy projects: Supporting the transition to study of year 1 undergraduate student. Interactive tools for prospective and first year UG students aiding transition into HE and supporting students on course familiarising students with HE, addressing concerns about study, encouraging reflections on overall goals and motivation and conveying a sense of the study skills necessary to succeed.
6	Student support services	Get Ahead programme - increase number of participants on this summer programme for UG applicants offering them a series of workshops and tours to prepare for entry in the autumn term.	No	2010/11	160	100	100	100	100	100	100	This programme is part of the College's retention strategy. Students are signposted to support services at Birkbeck, are introduced through workshops to the range of skills that they will need for successful study and get to explore the building and library.
7	Student support services	Number of students attending Academic Development workshops and Stay Ahead workshops that all aim to support student retention	No	2012/13	To establish baseline	Baseline	Increase on baseline	Increase on baseline	Increase on baseline	Increase on baseline	Increase on baseline	These workshops are an update and significant expansion to the previous target related to Stay Ahead winter programme
8	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Number of students who apply through an Institutional Progression Agreement from a partner institution to Birkbeck	No	2011/12	75	100	150	200	200	200	200	Instituional Partnership Agreements were devised in 2012/13 in order to promote progression opportunities from FE Colleges and other partner institutions.
9	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Number of students who receive Matrix accredited IAG interview through joint Birkbeck-UEL IAG service	Yes	2013/14	Baseline to be established	New service	2000	2200	2300	2400	2500	A new collaborative IAG service between Birkbeck and UEL was created at our new partnership building in Stratford, east London.

Optional commentary on milestones. This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.