

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH ACCESS AGREEMENT

The University of Portsmouth is committed to ensuring that students who can benefit from courses at the University are not prevented from attending because they face financial hardship.

This Access Agreement sets out:

1. The University's policy on tuition fees for full-time home undergraduates
2. The bursaries and access to learning funds which are available to students enrolled on University courses.
3. The approach of the University to make available information on financial support to prospective and current students.
4. A projected financial analysis, of student fee income and expenditure on bursaries, outreach activities and enhanced financial advice.
5. The outreach and support activities undertaken by the University which focus on widening participation and access
6. The milestones by which the University will judge its performance, particularly in outreach activities, and the ways in which that performance will be monitored.

1 UNIVERSITY FEE POLICY

From the academic year 2006/7, the University will be charging all new home and EU students on i) its full-time undergraduate programmes and ii) its full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education a fee of £3,000 per year, which will be uplifted by the inflation index published by the government each year. The exceptions will be those programmes with sandwich placement years or approved years of study abroad for which the fee will be £600 per year. The £3,000 fee limit will also apply to students studying on University of Portsmouth undergraduate programmes franchised to our partners who are currently Chichester College, South Downs College and Flagship Training Ltd (HMS Collingwood).

2 BURSARIES AND OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- 2.1** We shall adopt a system of bursaries through which students coming from households in the lower range of incomes will receive an additional grant from the University of £500. This will be paid to those who qualify for state support with a family residual income of less than £24,700 in 2006. In future years this income threshold will be

raised in line with increases in state support. This University bursary is in addition to the statutory £300 bursary paid by the University to those students whose family residual income is £17,500 or below. For PGCE students, this support will be in addition to any other bursary support to which they may be entitled. The level of support available to students according to various household incomes is shown in Table 1.

Family income bands	Government grant	University bursary	Total financial support (examples within scales)
Up to and including £17,500	£2,700	£800	£3,500
£17,501 to £24,699	Sliding scale from £2,700 down to £1,500	£500	£3,200 (£17,500 income) £2,450 (£22,000 income) £2,000 (£24,699 income)
£24,700 to £37,425	Sliding scale from £1,500 down to £50	Not eligible	£1,500 (£24,700 income) £1,200 (£26,500 income) £1,042 (£28,000 income) £831 (£30,000 income) £50 (£37,425 income)

Table 1 Support for students related to examples of household income (assessed by the Student Loans Company)

2.2 The five-year cost projections of the above proposals are set out below in Table 2:

All years at 2006/07 prices	2006/07 Year 1 £,000	2007/08 Year 2 £,000	2008/09 Year 3 (assumed steady state) £,000	2009/10 Year 4 £,000	2010/11 Year 5 £,000
£300 statutory bursaries	240	480	720	720	720
University bursary scheme	714	1,428	2,142	2,142	2,142
Extension to access funds	300	600	750	750	750
Total	1,254	2,508	3,612	3,612	3,612

Table 2 Cost projections of proposed bursary scheme

2.3 In addition, the University's access funds, currently principally the Access to Learning Fund, will be increased to enable financial assistance to be given to those who demonstrate need during their period of registration at the University. We anticipate that those groups of students who narrowly fail to qualify for either bursary are most likely to face financial pressures, and the Access to Learning fund therefore will provide us with a flexible way of considering their needs. This addition to the access fund will be £300k in 2006, rising to £750k when all relevant students are paying the new tuition fees. Part-time students are also eligible to benefit from this fund on demonstration of need.

- 2.4 Students on franchised full-time undergraduate courses offered by our Further Education College partners will be offered the same level of support as students studying in the University.
- 2.5 The University will apply this bursary policy to all students ordinarily resident in the UK and Northern Ireland. Students from other EU states will however, only be eligible to claim the University's £500 additional bursary, as detailed in paragraph 2.1 above. They will not be eligible for the £300 statutory bursary unless there are changes in legislation advised to us.

3 FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

3.1 Providing Information

Students who are considering entering HE must be aware at an early stage of the financial commitment involved and of ways of planning ahead. We consistently aim therefore to ensure that prospective students and their parents have good, reliable and current information on all financial aspects of studying successfully at this level. The University already provides information on finance to students and their advisors through all its schools liaison and outreach activities, including the *UP for It* programme, aimed at year 7 to 11 pupils.

The means of communication which we use are varied and include:

- The University undergraduate prospectus
- The *Up for It* prospectus for Years 7 to 11 in schools and colleges
- Workshop sessions run by the *Up for It* team at, for example, year 9 Parents' Evenings
- Local radio phone-ins
- Specialist leaflets for distribution at higher education fairs
- Regular presentations at financial workshops in local schools and colleges

A Financial Supplement will be produced for 2006 entry which will be distributed with the 2006 Prospectus, through face-to-face activities and in response to web and telephone requests.

3.2 Information on total costs of tuition

We will ensure that, prior to commencing any course, all students are made fully aware of the tuition and any other academic costs which they will need to incur in order successfully to complete their chosen course.

3.3 Student Finance Centre

The six staff of the University's Student Finance Centre provide expert support and guidance to all students and have responsibility for administering the University's Access to Learning Funds and other hardship funds, including facilities to provide short-term loans. This means students can receive immediate reassurance of the financial support that they are to receive.

The University has recently established the additional post of Information and Liaison Co-ordinator (Student Finance) to develop further and to promote financial information and guidance, both internally and externally. The number of external events which are to be supported by specialist finance advice staff will be increased in 2005/06 from the current 25 to ensure that all schools and colleges within the Portsmouth sub-region are covered, providing a direct link to the outreach work being undertaken.

New events are scheduled to assist students already enrolled on courses. These will include budgeting programs and workgroups for students with difficulties managing their resources who require 'in depth' financial support and/or debt counselling

The dedicated University website (www.port.ac.uk/money) is an important source of information. It is updated regularly with changes to financial support or assistance available to students.

4 EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

The table below (Table 2) outlines the assumptions concerning the amount of fee income to be spent on access measures each year, for the first five years of this access agreement. The University understands that both fees and therefore expenditures contained within the agreement are subject to annual inflation at a rate determined nationally. However, for ease of comparison all figures are at 2006/07 prices, and assume that the current level of student recruitment continues.

	2006/07 Year 1 £,000	2007/08 Year 2 £,000	2008/09 Year 3 £,000	2009/10 Year 4 £,000	2010/11 Year 5 £,000
Total fee income	5,850	11,700	18,450	18,900	18,900
Bursaries	1,245	2,508	3,612	3,612	3,612
Additional outreach work	640	640	640	640	640
Enhanced financial guidance and information and post-entry support	400	400	400	400	400
Total expenditure	2,285	3,548	4,652	4,652	4,652
Expenditure as % of fees	39%	30%	25%	25%	25%

Table 2 Expenditure on additional access measures as a percentage of total fee income, 2006-2011

Notes:

- 1 The impact of students taking a gap year in 2005/06 is factored into the first 3 years' income

- 2 Expenditure on access measures represent a greater proportion of income in the early years, because a many of the access measures comprise outreach work so do not increase proportionately with fee-paying student numbers.
- 3 The University plans to adopt the proposed model bursary scheme. This means we will ask the Student Loan Company (SLC) to pay the £300 statutory bursaries on our behalf. We will also use the information on residual income from the SLC to inform our own income-based bursary scheme. No provision has been made in the above table either for any charge levied by the SLC to provide this service or for the significant administrative costs which would be incurred in the event of the SLC not being able to provide the means-test information required.
- 4 Existing directly identified expenditure on outreach work costs in the order of £500,000. This focuses purely on identified costs within the Schools Liaison Team and associated activities and takes no account of wide range of activities embedded either within academic departments or support departments such as the Student Finance Centre.

5 OUTREACH AND POST-ENTRY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

The University embeds its commitment to widening participation and raising aspiration within all its schools' liaison and other outreach work.

5.1 Schools' Liaison

The University has a dedicated schools' liaison team which employs ten people, of whom five have qualified teacher status. The team visits schools to inform potential students of the benefits of higher Education and to advise them on their choice of course. The team concentrates pre-entry advice and guidance and general promotional activity to those aged over 16.

5.2 The *UP for It* Initiative

In 2001, the University established a programme to reach out to young people in years 7 to 11. *UP for It* was designed to raise the level of interest amongst young people, particularly those living in the local region, in staying in full-time education and eventually progressing to higher education (HE). The design of *UP for It* activities recognises that early disengagement occurs in groups traditionally under-represented in HE. The University's outreach activities support teachers in providing inspirational activities and developing an understanding of HE from year 7 onwards. *UP for It* works through schools and also communicates directly through its club membership. Members receive magazines, access to a dedicated website and invitations to events.

Membership of *Up for It* is open to all young people in the target age group. However, many of these outreach activities are targeted at 11-16 schools in Portsmouth and its sub-region which have below average educational attainment measured by GSCE/GNVQ results.

We have developed specific streams of *UP for It* activity to target particular areas of need, and to take advantage of subjects where the University can provide clear added value to schools. Such programmes include *UP for Enterprise*, *UP for Sport*, *UP for Maths and Up for Health*. The University works in partnership with other relevant organisations in the development of these programmes. With an annual membership of approaching 5,000, we anticipate that by 2008, 10,000 young people will have participated in the *Up for It* programme

***UP for It* won national recognition with a HEIST Gold Award for Widening Participation in 2002.**

5.2.1 Expanding a successful programme

- Following discussions with Portsmouth City Council's Education Department, *UP for It Juniors* was piloted in a primary school in 2003, and has since been extended to other local primary schools.
- The expansion of the *UP for It* scheme that will be funded from 2006 will be targeted at:
 - schools with lower than average progression rates to HE (in Hampshire and Isle of Wight)
 - primary schools that feed our local A and B list 11-16 schools as defined by AimHigher
 - improving pre-entry advice and guidance for individual *UP for It* members and former members

5.3 AimHigher

The sub-regional AimHigher programme involves a consortium of local HEIs in Hampshire and its work is complemented by *Up for It* A summary of the activities of the AimHigher partnership, which has been agreed by all its HEI members, is at Annex A.

5.4 Supporting students with disabilities

We are committed to those students with a disability entering higher education and who may therefore require additional support. Not only do we welcome these students to the University but we also wish to see them study successfully for their chosen qualification. We have established therefore an Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre to assess pre-entry need and offer post-entry support. We envisage increasing the support offered through this centre as more students who require such assistance are attracted to study at the University.

6 PERFORMANCE MILESTONES AND MONITORING THE AGREEMENT

The University will measure its performance in terms of encouraging access by reference to the following parameters:

6.1 The number of students in receipt of fee remission

We will adopt as a minimum target the numbers in receipt of fee remission in the 2004/5 academic year. (This target figure is not yet available since the Student Loans Company has not yet processed all loan applications for 2004/05. It will be communicated to OFFA for inclusion in our agreement as soon as it is available to the University.)

6.2 Widening participation and retention milestones

Over the life of the agreement, we will aim:

- to exceed HEFCE's annually published location-adjusted benchmark for young full-time undergraduate entrants from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7 and to achieve the location-adjusted benchmark for low participation neighbourhoods
- to continue to exceed HEFCE's annually published location-adjusted benchmark for mature full-time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of HE and from low participation neighbourhoods
- to continue to have a lower than benchmark non-continuation rate following year of entry for young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods and for mature full-time first degree entrants

6.3 Monitoring the Access Agreement

The ultimate responsibility for monitoring the University's access agreement will lie with the Board of Governors. The annual monitoring of access agreement, including performance against the agreed targets will be exercised by the Board through its Student Academic and General Affairs Committee, which will receive an annual report on the Access Agreement. A remedial action plan will be required in the event of any shortfall in performance against the agreed targets.

SUMMARY

The University is already showing considerable commitment to raising aspirations in young people, both in the Portsmouth city region and beyond. It extends that commitment to ensure that the changed financial basis of higher education does not frustrate their ambition to undertake higher education. The University firmly believes that the measures set out above will ensure that the University's record of encouraging wider participation will be maintained.

ANNEX A

Collaboration between the University of Portsmouth, the University of Southampton, Southampton Solent University and the University of Winchester to promote access to higher education

The current Aimhigher partnership, led from the University of Winchester on behalf of a wide partnership including all HEIs in the Hants/Isle of Wight sub-region, is only one manifestation of a strongly collaborative approach to outreach activities amongst the HEIs concerned.

In 1996, the University of Southampton led a consortium including Southampton Solent University (then Southampton Institute), the University of Winchester (then King Alfred's College), the University of Portsmouth and the University of Chichester (then Chichester Institute of HE) to create the Wessex and Solent Partnership for Widening Participation, the aim of which was to promote access from disadvantaged and under-represented groups to higher education. Initial work with schools and colleges was focused on developing facilities and systems to support disabled students. From 1999 this was extended to encompass a range of activities including collaborative outreach, on-campus aspiration raising and access arrangements. Complementing this, the University of Portsmouth led a network with partner FE and Sixth Form Colleges in Portsmouth and the surrounding area aimed at improving progression of under-represented groups.

In 2002 the introduction of the HEFCE/LSC-funded *Partnerships for Progression* (P4P) provided an opportunity to build upon this history of collaboration, to strengthen the role of Further Education Colleges and schools and to work more closely with new partners, such as the OU, the local LEAs, Connexions and the local Learning and Skills Council. This has resulted in a considerable expansion of collaborative activities to promote access. The recent integration of P4P with Education Action Zone/Excellence Challenge initiatives to form Aimhigher (Hampshire & Isle of Wight), together with a significant uplift in funding, has further enhanced the partners' capacity to promote measures to increase and widen participation in higher education.

Currently, there are ten Aimhigher Action Programmes, each with a number of collaborative projects and activities:

1. **On-campus aspiration-raising activities** (summer schools and taster days). Led from the University of Southampton, this has led to better targeted summer schools in each of the HEIs, with substantially increased participation from young people in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. In addition Aimhigher regionally provides for summer schools with regionally based targeting in each of the HEIs, with matched funding from the ESF.
2. **Off-campus aspiration-raising activities** (outreach in schools and the community). Led from the University of Portsmouth and involving all partner HEIs, includes taster days, a student ambassador scheme and a range of community projects aimed at raising aspirations for HE.

3. **Admission and progression routes.** This action programme, led from Southampton Solent University, involves putting together cross-sector curriculum development teams to identify ways of facilitating admission and progression in a range of vocational subjects where there are particular progression issues and/or skills shortages. A common compact framework is under development as part of this initiative.
4. **Staff development.** Led by the core Aimhigher team at the University of Winchester, this involves promoting staff awareness of the challenges for learners in the changing school, FE and HE environment.
5. **Information, advice and guidance.** Led by Connexions, this involves developing common guidance materials, including teachers' packs and web sites, to enhance the understanding of young people and adults of the benefits and opportunities of progression to HE.
6. **Mapping, tracking, monitoring and evaluation.** Led by the core Aimhigher team, this involves collaborative targeting, monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of Aimhigher activities.
7. **Work-related and work-based learning.** Led by the Education Business Partnership, this involves raising aspirations and attainment through learning programmes linked with employers.
8. **Aspiration-raising among black and minority ethnic communities.** A new action programme for 2004/5, led from Portsmouth College and Southampton City College, involving targeted aspiration raising and mentoring.
9. **Aspiration-raising for disabled students.** A new action programme for 2004/5, led from Farnborough College of Technology, involving targeted aspiration raising and mentoring.
10. **Transition to post-compulsory education.** A new action programme for 2004/5, led by the core team at Winchester, involving mentoring support to enhance retention at FE and progression to HE.

The collaborative widening participation activities of the HEIs in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, especially those under Action Programme 3 above, provide a strong basis for a current Lifelong Learning Network pilot activities funded by HEFCE and SEEDA for 2005/06. A full Lifelong Learning Network proposal being developed by the four HEIs (plus University of Chichester for the Isle of Wight) for submission to HEFCE's Strategic Development Fund in March 2006.