
Agreement between the University of Bath and the Office for Fair Access

1. Background and Context

The University of Bath's student community is made up of 9055 undergraduates and 3017 postgraduates. Its mission is 'to advance knowledge through high quality research and teaching in partnership with business, the professions, the public services, the voluntary sector and other research and learning providers'. The University has a distinct academic approach which emphasises the education of professional practitioners and fosters high achievement. Bath's culture of applied studies strongly promotes placement learning, innovation and collaboration. Over 60% of undergraduates participate in a placement or study abroad experience. As a result, a significant proportion of Bath students undertake first degrees of four or even five years' duration.

The University is committed to ensuring that its particular approach to Higher Education is accessible to all who have the ability to benefit from it. The University's average 'A' level score on entry is currently around 315 points and there are about eight applications for each home/EU undergraduate place. Notwithstanding this, the University has ensured that its programme provision meets the diverse needs of local and regional learners, as well as national and international applicant pools. In addition to its degree-level provision on the Bath campus, the University has a track-record in delivering applied and vocational sub-degree provision in association with Further Education Colleges in the Swindon, Wiltshire and Bath locality. Bath's HND programmes are now being supplemented by a new Foundation Degree portfolio managed by its Division for Lifelong Learning. The development of a new campus in Swindon is providing major opportunities for the further enhancement of this activity.

The staff and student community at Bath is determined to build on its current track record of activity in encouraging participation and diversity. The profile of the current applicant and entrant pools shows two significant strengths on which Bath has to build. According to the latest HEFCE performance indicators (2002/03 data), 80.8% of the University's young full-time undergraduates come from state school backgrounds. This is the highest percentage recorded since the introduction of the indicators for the 1997/98 cohort, when Bath admitted 75% of its young entrants from state school backgrounds. Bath's benchmark for the admission of young state school entrants is 84.8%. This figure is higher than the benchmark applied to almost all of the research intensive, highly academically selective institutions with which the University would normally compare itself. Bath is therefore proving more attractive to state sector students than many of its peer institutions. Secondly, in the context of accessibility, the University has consistently exceeded its benchmarks for the number of disabled students on its full-time undergraduate programmes. The University is committed to widening participation for people with disabilities and specific learning difficulties and, to this end, is leading an Aimhigher West strand group of Higher and Further Education, school, voluntary sector and Connexions partners to raise awareness of Higher Education opportunities among disabled people, their teachers and advisors.

Against these strengths, it is necessary to set the challenges the University continues to face in increasing participation amongst students from the lower socio-economic groups and those from low participation neighbourhoods. Internal admissions data (See Tables 1-3 in

Annex 1) suggest that applicants from the lower socio-economic groups are slightly less likely to register with the University than their peers from the higher groups. For 2003 entry, 84% of known entrants were from professional, managerial, technical or skilled non-manual backgrounds whilst 82% of applications came from these groups. Applications from lower SEGs comprised 18% of the pool with known data but 16% of entrants. HEFCE performance indicators show that Bath continues to miss its benchmark for the number of entrants from low participation neighbourhoods by 4.6%. Moreover, the University's performance in this area has remained more or less static with an improvement of only 0.3% in the number of young entrants from these areas over the last five years.

The issues behind these statistics are complex, reflecting choices which applicants make about Bath as well as the choices Bath makes in relation to them. The University faces similar issues with some ethnic minority groups which are under-represented at Bath. One of the recent projects undertaken with institutional widening participation resource was an investigation into the pattern of recruitment to Pharmacy and Pharmacology degrees and this has assisted the Department in its understanding of the appeal of but also barriers to Pharmacy education for minority ethnic students. More work is also necessary to understand better the pattern of recruitment with respect to mature learners at Bath. The needs of mature learners are at the heart of the initiatives underway in the Division for Lifelong Learning where the University's lifelong learning portfolio, part-time higher education provision, Foundation Year and Associate College provision make a significant contribution to the learning opportunities available for mature candidates. An example of the University's innovation in this area is its unique Foundation Degree in Addictions Counselling, the market for which is centred on adult learners.

2. Tuition Fees

The University of Bath's policy with regard to the introduction of higher tuition fees from 2006 has been framed with reference to its commitment to access and participation and its intention to act as a champion of placement work and learning.

2.1 Fees for Full-time Degree, Foundation Degree and PGCE Provision

The University will levy a fee of £3000 for all undergraduate Home or European Union students commencing their studies as new entrants in 2006, excepting those defined by the Government as deferred entry candidates. PGCE students will also be charged at this rate. Entrants who pay fees of £3000 in 2006/07 will be charged £3000 plus the rate of inflationary increase agreed by the Government for each subsequent year of their studies. Exceptions will be made for students undertaking a work or study placement.

Students undertaking a full-year work or study placement will pay fees at one of two rates. Students undertaking a standard placement will pay £600 (plus the appropriate inflationary increase). Students undertaking an enhanced placement will pay £1000 (plus the appropriate inflationary increase). Details on the standard and enhanced placement packages are provided at Annex 2.

Students undertaking two placements or periods of study abroad in separate academic years but which aggregate to a full year away will pay 75% of the full fee of £3000 (plus the appropriate inflationary increase) for the two years in which the placements occur. This reflects the costs of supporting and administering two separate placement or study abroad periods.

Students on work-based learning programmes such as Foundation Degrees will pay fees at the full rate of £3000 (plus relevant inflationary increases) since work-based learning will not be regarded as a specific placement away from the University.

2.2 Fees for Full-time Higher National Diploma Provision

In 2006/07, the University expects to recruit a final cohort to a small number of Higher National Diploma programmes. Fees for these programmes will be set at the same rate as the standard maximum full-time fee levied on continuing students registered with the University prior to 2006. It is anticipated that the fee set for continuing students for 2006/07 will be £1200. The University will charge fees for subsequent years at this same rate plus the standard inflationary increase approved by the Government.

2.3 Fees for the Foundation Year

The University of Bath's Foundation Year enables 20-25 Home/EU students each year to undertake a Year 0 of preparation for Higher Education. The programme is currently delivered by City of Bath College of Further Education and discussions are underway with potential new partners. Students are members of the University from this Year 0 and progress on to a Bath campus degree subject to satisfactory performance. The programme has enabled numerous students to supplement existing Level 3 qualifications with the specific skills required for one of Bath's specialised degrees. The flexibility of the College study environment is particularly valuable for mature learners and those making career changes. The University wishes to support this group of students as part of its commitment to access, since many will make significant sacrifices, over a four-year period, to undertake their Higher Education. Foundation Year students will therefore pay fees at the same rate as the standard maximum full-time fee levied on continuing students registered with the University prior to 2006. This fee will be set by the Government but is anticipated to be in the region of £1200. Foundation Year students who progress on to subsequent years of study at Bath will be required to pay fees at the higher rate of £3000 plus the appropriate inflationary increase for Year 1 and subsequent years of their degree.

2.4 Fees for Part-time Programmes

As part of its commitment to access and diversity, the University does not intend to charge fees at the higher rate for part-time provision. Fees for part-time undergraduate programmes in 2006 will be set at the rate of 50% of the full-time fee for continuing students as set by the Government. On the basis of a full-time fee of £1200, this would mean a part-time fee of £600 for 2006/07. Part-time entrants in 2006 will pay for subsequent years of study on the same basis.

2.5 Fees for Lifelong Learning Provision

Fees for the University's extensive portfolio of short course lifelong learning provision will not be subject to any increase proportionate to the increase in fees for new full-time entrants from 2006.

2.6 Information on Fees

An outline of the University's policy on fees, including placement charges, will be set out in the Undergraduate Prospectus available to potential applicants in hard copy and via Bath's web-site. When the Government does not set the maximum tuition fee in advance of prospectus publication dates, the fee for the previous year will be quoted with advice to expect a nationally agreed inflationary increase.

In addition, a detailed fees schedule will be published annually by the Student Finance Office of the University on its web-pages. The University will use the publications made available to candidates at departmental open days and the packs sent to all those accepting an offer to highlight the contents and location of the annual fees schedule.

Under the University's agreement with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, all formal offers for full-time undergraduate programmes must be communicated to students through the Service rather than by Bath. It is not, at present, possible to set out individually customised fee information as part of this process but the University will co-operate fully with UCAS data-gathering processes to ensure adequate advance information to potential and live applicants. The University will also continue the briefings it has already started to put in place for Admissions Tutors and staff involved in departmental recruitment, interview and open day activities to ensure that institutional policies on fees are clearly communicated to enquirers and applicants. Section 4.2 below also refers to initiatives the University will put in place to ensure that fees issues are clearly understood by potential and live applicants.

3. Bursaries

To safeguard access, Bath is putting in place significant bursary support for eligible students. Bursary support will go well beyond the minimum required and will ensure that in the region of 21% of additional fee income is used from the outset to assist those with greatest financial need. The University is also committed to ensuring that placement learning is not rendered less attractive through the introduction of higher fees. Duration of study is a significant factor in student financial hardship and the University intends to use its new bursary framework to mitigate this. In total, in the first year of the scheme, Bath anticipates committing in the region of £841,955 to bursary support.

3.1 Standard Bursaries at Bath

Any student paying tuition fees at the rate of £3000 (plus inflation in subsequent years) and who is entitled to full Government assistance (set at £2700 for 2006), will receive a bursary from the University of £1500 in 2006. This sum will increase in the subsequent years covered by this agreement, at a rate of inflation equivalent to that applied to tuition fees. The University's commitment to bursaries of £1500 includes the minimum standard bursary of £300 as stipulated by the Department for Education and Skills. Students will be eligible for bursaries for each year of study with the exception of placement periods when alternative arrangements will be made (see section 3.3).

The University anticipates that about 18% of its entrants (approximately 393 students) will be entitled to full Government support and to a University of Bath bursary. Total investment in standard bursaries is anticipated to be £589,702 but the University guarantees to fund full standard bursaries on the basis of financial need for every eligible student whatever the final number.

Bursaries will be paid in cash but via instalments to take account of withdrawals and to suit the phasing of student need.

Students repeating a year of study will not normally be eligible for a bursary. Annual re-assessment will not be required but those whose circumstances have changes will be invited to apply for a review of the level of their bursary.

The University reserves the right to take into account additional income from other bursary schemes, whether internal or external, when assessing the level of any award from the University of Bath bursary fund.

The University will determine the eligibility of students from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for it bursary support once the appropriate devolved authorities have put in place their arrangements for student support.

3.2 Additional Bursaries

Students who miss the financial eligibility criteria for full Government support but whose residual household income is at or below £37,425 will be eligible for a University of Bath bursary as follows:

Household Residual Income	University of Bath Bursary
£17,500 and below	£1,500
£17,501 - £22,500	£1,200
£22,501 - £27,500	£900
£27,501 - £32,500	£600
£32,501 - £37,425	£300

The University anticipates making in the region of 414 awards available at one of these levels, amounting to an investment of £314,508.

Eligibility criteria for these bursaries are otherwise as set out in section 3.1 above. Again, bursaries will be paid in cash but via instalments to take account of withdrawals and to suit the phasing of student need.

3.3 Placement Bursaries

The University is keen to ensure that access to its distinctive brand of academic provision is maintained and enhanced and therefore wishes to ensure that students who might otherwise be deterred from the longer periods of study associated with placement learning receive appropriate financial support. Internal University data clearly shows a link between financial hardship, the duration of study and placement periods which are unpaid whilst incurring additional expenses. To mitigate this, the University will guarantee a bursary of at least £300 to all students in receipt of Government support from 2006. This is the minimum amount available. Students will be eligible for further assistance where placements are unpaid or attract low salaries. This assistance may be provided from either the University of Bath bursary fund or Access to Learning Funds. The total contribution from the Bath bursary fund will be in the region of £111,042 (for approximately 370 eligible students).

3.4 Bursary Information and Administration

The University will make information on its bursary packages available in the Undergraduate Prospectus for 2006 and subsequent years. The Prospectus is available in hard copy or on the University web-site. In addition, the University will promote the scheme through the *Choosing Bath* booklet made available to those receiving an offer and through presentations at institutional and departmental open days. The University may also produce other marketing materials specific to the bursary. This could include promotional bookmarks or postcards for use at Higher Education conventions and outreach events.

Detailed information will also be made available via the University's dedicated Student Money Service. This Service offers financial advice at University open days and provides counselling to prospective as well as current students. The Service is, as part of the existing widening participation strategy, committed to a programme of student finance talks at regional schools and colleges. This activity will be extended and further integrated with the

University's outreach activity. More information is provided in 4.2.1 below. As it is already beginning to do for Fees information, the University will also undertake briefings and staff development sessions to ensure that all staff involved in providing advice to potential and live applicants are aware of University policy.

The University intends, in principle, to work with Option 1 of the model bursary scheme set out by the UUK/SCOP Advisory Group on Bursaries. There is as yet, insufficient information on the nature of the services which may be made available under the other options. The University fully supports the principle of a bursary scheme which can be clearly understood by potential and live applicants, together with their families and advisors. It is concerned, however, that these groups should have some means of assessing their likely eligibility for a specific level of support from Bath prior to acceptance of an offer. The LEA financial assessment process inhibits this since it begins in the spring when the recruitment process is already advanced. The University will not be able to guarantee a specific level of bursary support to specific individuals before a full LEA assessment has been received but will look to provide advice based on the residual income bandings set out in section 3.2 above and on other relevant criteria such as receipt of Education Maintenance Allowances. Student Money Service advisors will be available to give tailored individual advice and the University will keep the resources needed to provide detailed assistance under review.

4. Existing and Additional Outreach Activity

The University's core objectives in relation to widening participation are straightforward. Bath is committed to:

1. Raising aspirations for Higher Education amongst young people from backgrounds currently under-represented at the University of Bath and in the sector generally
2. Improving the information available to potential students, their families and advisers concerning progression routes onto University programmes offered at the Bath and Swindon campuses, and at partner colleges, about entry criteria and the practicalities of financing undergraduate study
3. Diversifying its curriculum offer, delivery methods and modes of learning to attract a wider range of students
4. Enhancing student services and support networks to minimise the barriers to the retention of those from under-represented backgrounds

The sections below outline the scope of existing widening participation activity at Bath and explain how this work will be enhanced from 2006 on the basis of resources derived from additional fee income.

4.1 Existing Activity

The University's current action plan for these objectives is attached at Annex 3. The document outlines the projects and targets associated with the University's outreach activity on both its Bath and Swindon campuses. As the plan shows, Bath is very active within its local area Aimhigher partnership. The Higher Education providers in the South West have a long and successful history of working in partnership and are convinced that this makes sense to the groups with which they are trying to engage. The 14 Higher Education institutions and 35 Further Education colleges in the region have been collaborating since 1999 to work with schools and other partners to reach out to those groups currently under-represented within the student population. Aimhigher in the South West has a vision of a

seamless education and training service helping any individual to gain access to the educational opportunity which is right for them. Building local opportunities is central to the vision, particularly in areas where poor transport infrastructure restricts access. There are four Aimhigher partnerships in the South West, one at regional level and three at area level. The four partnerships have designed programmes of activity to raise HE awareness, aspirations and attainment as appropriate in each of the areas.

Amongst several other initiatives funded through Aimhigher, the University has undertaken an exciting and innovative 18-week programme, mentoring 75 Year 10 pupils at Hreod Parkway School in Swindon. The scheme involved a mixture of face-to-face mentoring, group team-building exercises and monitored e-mentoring. The University itself funds a post to undertake outreach beyond the remit or geographical scope of Aimhigher West. This activity includes curriculum enrichment in which academic departments, students and project officers work to engage young people with subject specific themes but also with the general ambiance of university life. The primary aim of these activities is to raise levels of attainment in school work but all of them also include the opportunity to undertake an exciting extra-curricular activity. Instead of giving participants a talk on student clubs and societies, student ambassadors actually offer an activity in which the children can engage. These include media activities, street dancing, and Ultimate Frisbee sessions. Through the European Social Fund, Aimhigher and its own resources, the University is also prominent in offering four annual residential Summer Schools for students within and beyond the South West, including one at the Bath campus targeted specifically at FE students and another, delivered in a partner college, aimed at raising awareness among year 10 pupils of HE delivered in FE. In 2003/04 the University undertook a pilot Creative Arts summer school aimed at encouraging a positive approach to learning and to student life amongst children from the three most deprived wards in Swindon.

Swindon itself is becoming the focus for an exciting and challenging programme of activity designed to make the University's campus there a hub for widening participation. The University currently operates at a site called Oakfield, a former secondary school now remodelled to serve the needs of Higher Education. The University of Bath in Swindon is developing partnerships with industry, public services and local communities, aimed at contributing to Swindon's economic growth and urban regeneration. It is also operating as a base from which to develop a Curriculum for Innovation. Bath has made a bid for support to produce a business plan for a lifelong learning network based at Oakfield and for its development as a hub for vocational education. The disciplinary base for the portfolio in Swindon is being discussed with regional stakeholders. Rather than duplicating what is already available at Bath, the facilities at Oakfield and, in the future, a second site, will enable the University to offer new disciplines such as creative and performance arts. Existing disciplines such as health and social care will be expanded, including a possible new part-time degree in Social Work with Swindon Borough Council. Oakfield is already hosting some of the teaching provision for the University's top-up BA degree in Early Childhood Studies and Early Years SCITT provision may follow.

4.2 Additional Activity

The University's approach to the development of additional outreach activity for its two campuses is based on the identification of existing unique strengths. Whilst many of Bath's activities are framed in ways which will be replicated by institutions across the sector, the University believes that it can build on a number of distinctive features.

Firstly, Bath's experience in providing applied and professional learning provides a clear rationale for developing a particular approach to widening participation based around Oakfield as a hub for vocational and work-based provision. Because of the role it intends to play in the regeneration of an area of significant educational disadvantage, the University

has resolved to allocate the resources available at Oakfield to this challenging range of activities. This amounts to a commitment of over £1 million per annum in overheads. The University will develop a plan for outreach work in Swindon schools and colleges to ensure that young people growing up in those communities in most need of intervention are aware of and engaged with the opportunities available to them in the future. In addition to the Early Years and Social Work provision mentioned above, this will mean curriculum development and outreach activity in the discipline areas of Sport, Business and Computing.

Given the University's commitment to the development of Foundation Degrees and the value it places on applied and professional education, it is envisaged that aspiration-raising outreach work will encompass not just schools and colleges but engagement with employers and people already in employment who would wish to engage in part-time, work-based learning. From 2006, the University will provide additional resource for a widening participation outreach worker's post, based in Swindon. It is envisaged that approximately £45,000 will be allocated to this work annually, to include a staff appointment and an operating budget for the post.

Building on the 2004 pilot of a Creative Arts Summer School in Swindon, and experience in offering curriculum enrichment activities on the Bath campus, further themed activities will be developed for relevant subjects, aimed at motivating young learners, maintaining their engagement with education and helping them to achieve a positive perspective on the student experience. From 2006, resources in the region of £40,000 will be allocated to these projects, with £30,000 specifically allocated to activity at the Swindon Campus. This compares with £7,122 allocated in 2003/04. Target groups will include primary and secondary pupils at schools and colleges in the most deprived wards of Swindon, rural areas of Wiltshire with low staying on rates, and specialist schools throughout the regions served by the Bath and Swindon campuses.

Another distinctive feature of existing activity at the University is the involvement in outreach activity of specialist Student Money Advisors. Under the current action plan, the University's dedicated Money Service is committed to a programme of school and college visits to provide specific financial guidance to prospective applicants and their parents. The guidance is generic rather than Bath specific but emphasises the University's long-standing commitment to a financial advice service open to student before as well as after admission. The University is keen to develop an even more integrated approach to the provision of admissions advice and financial aid in the context of its outreach activity.

From 2006, the University will provide additional resource, for an even more extensive programme of student finance talks and counselling sessions for prospective applicants and a specific post will be nominated to work across the boundaries of the standard Education Liaison Officer and Student Money Advisor role. This will enable the University to respond to a greater number of requests for school and college intervention on these themes and for one individual to deal with a greater multiplicity of queries, typically interconnected, from prospective students and parents with little familiarity with Higher Education processes. This will mitigate the existing need for onward referral to the Money Service of a range of queries which sometimes arise in the course of standard widening participation liaison work and provide a single point of expertise to inform the applicant-focused revision and development of admissions publications and advice materials.

This additional Education and Money Advisor role will also serve to enhance the capacity of existing staff to undertake guidance work in targeted schools and colleges to support Higher Education application and preparation sessions. The post-holder will also be expected to play a major role in the further enhancement of University web-based admissions guidance, including the introduction of UCAS Entry Profiles. Work on Entry Profiles has already begun at Bath but the University is aware, from its own market research, of limitations in their use

and applicability in widening participation contexts. It is keen to develop them in such a way as to make a clear contribution to more streamlined and easily accessible admissions information.

It is anticipated that in the region of £45,000, will be allocated to this project annually to include one staff appointment and an operating budget for the post.

Excluding the £1 million investment in operating the Swindon campus of the University as a widening participation hub, the University's additional investment in outreach from 2006 will therefore be in the region of £130,000 annually. Including investment in the operation of the Swindon campus, this sum increases to £1,130,000.

4.3 Student Support and Retention

Bath has an enviably low rate of non-completion (3.3% for full-time undergraduates starting in 2001-2). Support from a range of specialist services including Learning Support, the Money Service, Student Counselling Service and Careers Advisory Service all helps. In addition, the University uses earmarked widening participation funding to support the Students' Union in the co-ordination of support groups for disabled students, mature students, part-time learners, minority ethnic students and student parents. Institutional resources are also used to support the Earn & Learn programme operated through the Union Joblink Office. Institutional funds have also been allocated, via the Widening Participation Advisory Committee to the Learning Support Service to assist students from widening participation backgrounds who do not qualify for a Disabled Student's Allowance and to the Student Money Service to assist with case work associated with students from non-traditional backgrounds. This reflects the pragmatic approach taken at Bath to widening participation project work. The University intends to keep investment in these areas under review from 2006 as it does at present.

5. Institutional Milestones

The University of Bath is firmly committed to the principle of selecting students for admission to its programmes on academic merit and potential. It believes that specific targets relating to the number of students admitted by background characteristics such as school type or social class are inconsistent with this principle. The University does, however, monitor the profile of its applicant and entrant pool closely. For the purposes of this agreement, the University regards the significant area for attention to be the proportion of students admitted from the lower socio-economic groups (SEGs). The fact that the percentage admitted from these groups has increased by only 0.3% across the lifespan of the HEFCE performance indicators confirms that this must be Bath's priority for action. Table 4 in Annex 1 summarises the HEFCE performance indicator data in time-series for contextual purposes and this provides a baseline for comparing the profile of Bath's entrants in 2006 with their characteristics previous years. The University will also monitor the proportions of its student population in receipt of Government financial support, as it does at present, and this will be one factor in assessing the need for any adjustments to bursary packages in the years following 2006/07.

The University's first goal in relation to improving access and ensuring wider participation is to eliminate any significant differential between the proportion of students applying from the lower SEGs and the proportion subsequently joining the University. Bath is particularly interested in the 2% of applicants from the lower SEGs who apply but either do not receive an offer or choose not to accept a place (Table 3 in Annex 1 relates). Data from the 2004 cohort has not yet been fully analysed but, on the basis of 2003 data, an additional 32 entrants from the lower SEGs would be needed to bring the relevant proportions of applicants and entrants into line.

The University's second goal will be to build on the achievement of the first milestone to increase the total number of applications received from candidates coming from the lower SEGs. The University wishes to see a 2% increase in applications from these groups within the five-year lifespan of this agreement. On the basis of 2003 data, a 2% increase would mean an additional 314 applications. Taking an average of the application to accept conversion rates for the lowest socio-economic groups over the last five years (Table 1 in Annex 1 refers), Bath would expect this to deliver around 35 additional students from the relevant backgrounds.

Whilst these absolute numbers may not sound dramatic, the factors which currently limit the University in its recruitment of students from these backgrounds are not always easily tractable and are likely to interact in complex ways. They include the attractiveness of the Bath curriculum offer to the relevant young people from the University's regional hinterland; real and perceived hurdles in relation to entry criteria; financial issues and perceptions of what Bath as a University and a City has to offer as a social experience in comparison with other opportunities in the region.

Bath is determined to better understand the interplay of these factors. The activities in its Widening Participation Action Plan under Objective 2 indicate the work already underway in relation to the first of the goals. Those under Objective 1 and 3 relate to the second. The operational targets set out below are not intended to replace the detailed action planning process which the University will undertake, as usual, for 2006/07. They are, however, put forward as specific activities capable of making a contribution to the achievement of the two goals set out above. New targets will be set for each year covered by this agreement, via the University's Action Planning process for Widening Participation. The extent to which particular projects are expanded or scaled back and replaced with something new will depend on an annual review of the activities themselves and on the contribution each is judged to be making towards the achievement of the two key goals.

Operational Targets for 2006/07

- 8 additional events for Swindon-based school and college students, with a focus on progression routes into and through professional and applied higher education (none with this specific focus in 2004/05). *This activity will form part of a broader marketing strategy for the University's Swindon campus as provision there develops.*
- Engagement with at least 3 new work-based learner groups (employer-based), to identify appropriate progression routes and support mechanisms into higher education. *This work will supplement that already underway to support the Bath Foundation Degree portfolio.*
- 3 each of subject-specific themed aspiration-raising activities in Business, Computing and Sports Development (1 for Sports in 2004/05; none for Business and Computing). 3 Creative Arts activities will also be organised (1 in 2004/05). *It should be noted that 'activities' may involve week-long engagements with specific student cohorts as well as single day events. Bath is currently exploring how this target may be further enhanced through participation in project work through the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth.*
- 10 additional student finance presentations (20 planned for 2004/05). *The University will also be undertaking a significant quantity of additional one-to-one financial aid counselling.*

- 8 additional events with Year 9,10 or 12 students in targeted schools and colleges outside the Aimhigher region (8 planned for 2004/05). *The University will want to undertake some market analysis in preparation for and as part of this work to better understand current perceptions of the institution and what it has to offer, and to determine how best to present its expanding portfolio of provision and its two campuses.*
- Completion of Entry Profiles for 100% of Bath programmes by the end of 2006/07 (none available at present). *Improved admissions information, through the post outlined in section 4.2 will play a key role in ensuring that as many students as possible, and widening participation candidates in particular, are well briefed about institutional approaches to the identification of potential and selection criteria generally.*

6. Overall Institutional Investment in Access Measures

In 2003/04 Bath allocated £173,365 of its own resources to specific widening participation posts and projects. These funds are over and above the resources allocated via Aimhigher, which amounted to £176,947. Of these Aimhigher funds, £84,867 related to student mentoring and aspiration-raising events, both of which contribute to diversity in terms of the socio-economic background of Higher Education students. The remainder, £92,080 related to Bath's leadership of the Disability strand of the regional partnership. Other institutional resources, including HEFCE retention funding, clearly support access aims and objectives generally by, for example, the maintenance of a personal tutor system together with the general academic and pastoral support framework. Leaving this aside though, and taking institutional and Aimhigher project funding together, the institution's commitment to access in 2004/05 was in the region of £350,312 including the Disability strand or £258,232 if it is excluded.

From 2006, these resources will be supplemented by investment of £130,000 for the posts and projects outlined above.

Added to the initial sum of £904,210 (rising year on year) invested in bursary provision, this will make a total of £1,384,522 in 2006/07, excluding the £1million committed annually to the support of operations at Swindon. Given the centrality of Swindon developments to the University's plans for widening participation, this should arguably be included in the total investment.

The University currently estimates that its additional fee income in 2006/07 will be £3,879,847. Excluding the Swindon overheads, the overall investment in access and financial aid therefore constitutes 36% of this revenue.

7. Compliance and Monitoring

The University undertakes to monitor compliance with this access agreement and progress towards its institutional milestones. Annual monitoring of the profiles of the applicant and entrant pools by widening participation indicators is already undertaken by the Senate, together with the Equal Opportunities Committee. Monitoring of expenditure on widening participation projects and initiatives is undertaken by the Widening Participation Advisory Group established by the Senate. This Group maintains financial control over project allocations, which are subject to specific reporting requirements. As the Group responsible for operational implementation of the University's strategic objectives in association with widening participation, this body will review the institutional milestones set as part of this agreement and the targets set for progress on these will be built into the framework of the action plan for the 2006/07.

8. Conclusion

The existing projects and proposals outlined here reflect the scope of Bath's commitment to access and participation. The University believes that it must better understand the barriers to participation for those who have the capacity for but choose not to apply for one of its programmes but it is also convinced that it must extend its activity further into markets with which it has not previously engaged. Developments underway at present will extend the University's existing commitment to applied and vocational learning into new areas, new modes of study and new styles of learning. This can only enrich the University community and the markets it serves. The plans which the University has put into place for bursary support following the introduction of a new fees structure from 2006/07 are significantly more than minimal. Fees for part-time learning, HND and Foundation Year programmes will not be moved onto the new structure at all, reflecting the University's commitment to these key elements in its widening participation strategy. Bath is confident that, taken together, the measures outlined here will safeguard and enhance access to an already open and diverse institution whilst, at the same time, supporting its distinctive framework of applied and placement learning. The University seeks agreement from the Office of Fair Access to implement these proposals for the period 2006/07 to 2010/11.

Placement Models at Bath

Model A: *Standard Placement* Minimum Requirement

- One member of academic staff in charge of the placements for the Department.
- A Placement Handbook for students.
- Assistance with finding a suitable placement.
- A departmental procedure for approving of the placement as suitable for the academic programme.
- Placement briefing for all students.
- Either a visit to the student on placement or the provision of a dedicated Placement web site which is used for communication purposes during the placement.
- A placement report and debriefing of students.
- A procedure for assessing that the placement has been completed satisfactorily for the award of credit.

Model B: *Enhanced Placement* Minimum Requirement

All of the provisions of Model A, and in addition:

- At least one visit if the placement is in the UK
- A placement conference or equivalent comprehensive debriefing of students following the placement.
- Assessed work in relation to the placement which contributes directly and non-trivially to the degree classification.