

Institute of Education, University of London Access Agreement

The Institute's profile

The Institute is a self-governing College of the University of London, and offers a unique breadth of teaching and research in education and related areas of social science and professional practice. The Institute's student profile is overwhelmingly postgraduate. In 2003/04 it had just over 6,400 students, equivalent to 2,900 FTE. Approximately 1,700 were full-time, of whom 65% were pursuing initial teacher education (ITE) courses. Overall, 23% of the Institute's students were registered for ITE courses, 12% for research degrees and 65% for professional development courses. This latter group included those registered for conventional Master's and Graduate Diploma awards, the BEd, professional awards (such as the National Professional Qualification for Headship), and a range of accredited outreach and short course programmes.

The Institute's objectives for access and participation

Given its mission and the overwhelmingly postgraduate nature of its provision, the Institute's work is not reflected in many of the performance indicators so far developed by the HE sector for access and participation. It is nevertheless committed to equality of opportunity for all current and potential students, including the mature and part-time entrants who make up the majority of its student body. Through its taught programmes, research and third stream activity, the Institute also seeks to make a positive contribution to initiatives across the sector, although these may not result in direct recruitment to its own courses. This is evident, for example, through its strong commitment to work with schools, colleges and Local Education Authorities to raise aspirations and achievement amongst young people in institutions facing challenging circumstances.

The Institute's key objectives for widening access and participation are set out in its Corporate Plan, and include:

- broadening its student, and staff, profile and providing further opportunities for participation through the development of more flexible course structures and modes of delivery;
- enhancing further its student support systems, and ensuring that academic support and other services facilitate progression and completion;
- contributing to regional and national developments supporting wider access to HE and other phases of education. This includes, for example, continued work with the Institute's partner schools and colleges - particularly in those areas where there is currently a low participation rate in HE – and the development of research and teaching in priority areas such as adult basic skills;
- maintaining its active role in the AimHigher initiative;
- implementing its Race Equality Policy and associated action plan;
- enhancing access for students with disabilities and supporting their successful progression and completion.

Scope of the access agreement

Two areas of the Institute's work will be affected by the introduction of variable fees, and both are covered by this access agreement:

- undergraduate provision at BEd and foundation degree level;
- ITE provision, including the TTA-funded Primary and Secondary PGCEs and the HEFCE-funded Post-Compulsory courses.

The number of undergraduate students has grown significantly in recent years and the Institute considers the BEd and foundation degree as making an important contribution to its strategy for widening access and participation. But given its mission and profile these courses account for a relatively small proportion of its overall student body: in the current year there are only 2 full-time Home/EU students registered for the BEd, and 53 part-time; a new foundation degree will be launched in the Summer term 2005 with an initial intake target of 25 full-time students. Students who successfully complete the foundation degree will be offered opportunities to progress to other appropriate awards, and this may lead to some modest growth in full-time registrations for the BEd between 2006/07 and 2010/11. But numbers are expected to remain broadly at the current level.

Registrations for the PGCE courses are significantly higher, with more than 1,000 full-time Home students registered during the current year and a further 400 registered for part-time programmes. The majority of these students are on TTA-funded courses. The TTA is undertaking a major review of funding for initial teacher training, and expects to issue proposals on future funding arrangements during March 2005. The TTA is also working with the DfES to clarify the issue of 'end-on' courses. The Institute's planning for variable fees is therefore based on a number of possible scenarios, and this is reflected in the financial information included in annex A. However, the Institute may wish to revise its plans once future funding arrangements have been clarified by the TTA and DfES.

If revisions become necessary, then these will again be developed in the context of the key objectives set out above. The Institute would then submit any revisions to the Director of Fair Access for approval.

Tuition Fee Levels

Foundation and BEd Honours degree

Fees will be set at £3,000 per annum for these courses. Support will be provided for students based on their means, with further bursaries or scholarships for students successfully completing their course to support progression to other appropriate awards.

PGCE programmes

Subject to further clarification from the TTA and DfES, fees will be set at £3,000 per annum for all full-time PGCE courses. Support will again be provided for students based on their means, and will be provided through the provision of bursaries or scholarships.

Subject to the caveats noted above, the Institute will charge the fee of £3,000 in 2006/07. It anticipates that fees for each subsequent year will be set at the same level, plus an allowance for inflation. If funding arrangements or market conditions change, the Institute may review fee levels for specific courses or introduce further targeted support for under-represented student groups. The Institute will review both fee levels and support arrangements annually, alongside its progress towards the milestones set out below.

Bursaries and financial support

The Institute will provide bursaries at the standard minimum level of £300 for all eligible students. These will be available to all students in receipt of the full state Higher Education Maintenance Grant (currently £2,700), and to EU students from outside the UK who may not be eligible for the Grant. The Institute intends to administer and pay these bursaries through the model scheme developed by Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals.

Until future funding arrangements for the PGCE have been clarified, it is not possible to give robust projections of the number of students who will qualify for the £300 bursary. In large part, this will depend on how students' training salaries and other forms of financial support are treated when the Student Loans Company assesses their eligibility. But based on currently available information, it is estimated that one-third of the students covered by this agreement, or 363 per annum, will be eligible for the full £300 bursary. The cost to the Institute will therefore be up to £108K in 2006/07, rising to £129K in 2010/11.

Payment arrangements for these bursaries will be confirmed once details of the UUK/SCOP model scheme have been finalised. But it is anticipated that payments will normally be made at the start of each year for which students are registered.

In addition to the standard bursary, the Institute will also provide support for students from less well-off households who do not qualify for the full £300. UK students in this category will be those receiving state support below the maximum figure of £2,700. The Institute expects that these bursaries will be administered through the UUK/SCOP model scheme, with means testing completed by the LEA and payments processed by the SLC. It may review this aspect of its support arrangements if it cannot be administered through the model scheme. It will also need to consider any implications of the Government's proposal (announced on 20th January) not to means test the first £1,200 of the Maintenance Grant for PGCE students.

The number of students eligible for additional bursaries will again depend on future funding arrangement for the PGCE, but it is estimated that a further one-third of students will be eligible. The cost to the Institute will therefore be up to £54K in 2006/07, rising to £62K in 2010/11.

Scholarships

The Institute will provide non-means tested scholarships for selected students who successfully complete the foundation degree, BEd or PGCE and then re-register for another appropriate award. These will provide an incentive for able students from under-represented groups to continue their studies, and therefore support progression. Scholarships will normally be offered in the form of fee waivers.

Student welfare – support for recruitment and retention

The Institute has significantly increased investment in its student welfare service, and regards this as a vital element of its commitment to broaden access and participation. In order to meet the objectives set out in its Corporate Plan, the Institute will invest a proportion of additional fee income in enhancing services further. In particular it will appoint an additional part-time member of staff to provide financial advice for registered and prospective students from under-represented social groups. It will also retain staff currently employed on short-term contracts to support equalities projects to support recruitment and retention among a range of under-represented groups.

Outreach work

The Institute has strong relationships with its 500 partner colleges and schools, London LEAs, and more broadly within the UK. It also has well-established links with organisations working in post-compulsory and higher education, health and other public services and not-for-profit organisations.

The Institute's work with these partners includes a range of activities from voluntary work by its beginning teachers, to non-accredited courses and consultancy services for professionals and employers which build on its research base. The Institute is currently reviewing its ITE programmes, and a revised model for its Primary PGCE courses was introduced at the start of 2004/05. A new model for Secondary courses will be implemented in 2005/06. As part of this re-modelling the Institute will strengthen its existing links with partner schools and enhance the range of services and other outreach activities that it provides.

In addition to these projects, the Institute will continue to contribute to initiatives across London through AimHigher. The Institute hosts the London AimHigher team, and has developed close links with both the team and its other stakeholders. The Institute has supported the work of AimHigher in a number of ways, including for example:

- acting as 'banker' for its cross-regional initiatives, including the £6.3m London ESF Summer School Programme. This was a role that the Institute offered to take on, although as a postgraduate institution it derived no direct benefit for progression to HE;
- providing collegial access to education researchers with an interest in widening participation and access;

- supporting the creation of the London Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics partnership by links with the London Science Learning Centre, based at the Institute;
- developing a close working relationship between AimHigher and London Challenge, the Chief Adviser for London Schools and the Institute's new London Centre for Leadership in Learning;
- jointly sponsoring the London Challenge 14-19 Conference, to be held in April 2005.

From 2006/07 the Institute will invest £111K of the additional income generated by variable fees (rising to £127K in 2010/11) to enhance its support for the AimHigher team and specific projects.

Information for students

The Institute will provide all prospective students with clear guidance on tuition fee levels for the duration of each course through its prospectus, web-pages and other marketing materials. Students will also be referred to other sources of useful information. It will also provide clear guidance on the bursaries and scholarships supported from additional fee income, and other forms of financial support.

In addition, the Institute will continue to provide advice to prospective and registered students on an individual basis. This will be done through the enhanced student welfare service, and will focus in particular on under-represented groups and those at greatest risk of non-completion.

Milestones

Given the overwhelmingly postgraduate nature of its provision, there is a limit to how far the Institute can widen direct access on to its own programmes. Entry to the PGCE is also subject to a number of national requirements, which are outside its control. As noted previously, however, the Institute is committed to equality of opportunity for all current and potential students, and the targets and milestones set out below reflect the areas where it believes it should most effectively focus its work in order to enhance both access and participation to its own programmes, and to contribute to broader initiatives.

Under-represented groups

Each year the Institute agrees recruitment targets with the TTA for the proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students registering for the Primary and Secondary PGCE. The Institute has undertaken a number of initiatives to ensure that these targets are met: in 2003/04 21.6% of TTA-funded PGCE students are from BME groups, against a target of 18.8%. Work will continue to ensure that this figure is maintained, in line with future targets to be agreed with the TTA.

Although it does not have a formal target with the TTA, the Institute has taken comparable action to increase the number of male students registering for its

Primary PGCE course. This has again increased the diversity of the Institute's student body: in 2002/03 (the most recent year for which national figures are available), male students made up 9% of registrations for the Institute's Primary PGCE against 13% nationally. In the 2003/04 the Institute increased this figure to 17%.

However, while the Institute has been successful in recruiting these groups, progression and completion rates are lower than the average for the relevant courses: in 2003/04, for example, 76% of BME students successfully completed PGCE programmes against 84% of those from other groups; for the Primary PGCE, 73% of male students completed against 87% of women. The Institute already has systems in place to support these students, and plans to enhance this support further from 2005/06. Specifically it plans to implement individual needs assessment for students who may be at risk of not completing, and to provide pre-sessional programmes and ongoing, tailored tutorial support.

Completion rates will continue to be monitored annually by the Dean responsible for initial teacher education (ITE), and by the ITE Programme Board. The Institute's objective is to increase completion rates for these groups year-on-year, and to bring them fully into line with those for other students no later than 2010/11.

The Institute will launch its new foundation degree in April 2005. This will recruit primarily from teaching assistants in London schools and the Institute has been working with Camden – its nearest LEA – in developing the programme. The majority of those expected to register for the degree do not have the level of academic qualifications normally required for direct entry into higher education, and the programme is therefore an important initiative in widening access beyond the Institute's current student body. Subject to HEFCE approval, the Institute will bid for additional student places to expand the foundation degree by a further 25 students from 2006/07.

The Institute will provide opportunities for students successfully completing the foundation degree to progress to further study, and this commitment has been central to the development of the programme. The Institute's target is that at least 10% of foundation degree students should progress to further study or professional development at the Institute by 2007/08, rising to 20% by 2010/11.

Future Outreach Work

The development of the foundation degrees will support the priorities set out by the DfES in its London Challenge Strategy, and in particular those linked to the re-modelling of the school workforce. This re-modelling is central to the Strategy, and the Department highlights the key role to be played by teaching assistants in raising aspirations and levels of attainment among the social and economic groups currently under-represented in HE, and the need to enhance teacher recruitment and retention.

The re-modelling of the Institute's PGCE programme has been informed by the London Challenge, and the broader widening participation agenda. The revised programme will be launched in 2005/06, and will enable the Institute to strengthen

further its relationships with partner schools and colleges and extend its existing range of outreach activities.

As part of this extended outreach work, the Institute will work with partners – including pathfinder professional development schools – on projects specifically designed to raise aspirations and awareness of opportunities in higher education. These will include, for example, conferences and other events in local schools for under-represented groups. The Institute will hold a minimum of three such events each year from 2006/07.

As noted previously, the Institute hosts the London AimHigher team. From 2006/07 it will allocate additional funds to support the accommodation, infrastructure and administrative services which underpin the team's work. It will also increase its involvement in specific AimHigher projects, building on its enhanced links with partner schools across the region.

The Institute is currently reviewing its widening access and participation policy, and the revised policy will be submitted to its Senate and governing Council for approval in June 2005. Once approved, a detailed strategy and implementation plan will be developed covering:

- admissions, recruitment and induction;
- course design;
- student support;
- pedagogical development;
- support for progression and completion;
- students' continued professional development.

The strategy and implementation plan will be developed alongside the re-modelled PGCE, and will be completed by December 2005. Implementation will be completed by September 2007.

The Institute will also complete a major review of its advanced courses during the Summer term 2005. Some changes will be made for 2005/06 in the light of this ongoing work. More significant changes – including those linked to implementation of the widening access and participation strategy – will take longer to achieve. The Institute's revised programme of advanced courses will therefore be launched for the start of 2006/07, with all courses to be fully compliant with the access and participation strategy no later than September 2007.

The Institute makes a significant contribution to the access agenda through its research. This includes, for example, its leading role in all four of the DfES's national research and development centres, including the Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning and the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy. Its staff have also undertaken influential research on diversity and inclusion for other government and national agencies.

In June 2005 it will launch a major new centre – the Centre for Leadership in Learning – which will undertake research, teaching and consultancy with a particular

focus on urban education. The centre will in particular work with schools in challenging circumstances.

The Institute's research will continue throughout the period covered by this agreement, and will contribute both to theoretical understandings on issues such as diversity and inclusion, and – it is intended – to policy formation at a regional and national level.

Monitoring arrangements

Compliance with the access agreement will be monitored by the Institute's Equal Opportunities Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Director. The Committee meets termly, and reports annually to Senate.

The Deputy Director is also a member of the Planning and Resources Committee (PRC), which is the senior management group responsible for advising the Director on financial and strategic matters. PRC co-ordinates the Institute's annual planning cycle, and the Deputy Director will ensure that any further action that may be needed to ensure that milestones are achieved is agreed through this process.

Progress will be formally reported to the HEFCE through the Institute's Annual Monitoring Statement, which is produced by PRC and considered by its governing Council prior to submission to the funding council.

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