

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE ACCESS AGREEMENT, 2006 TO 2008

1 Preamble

1.1 From October 2006 the LSE proposes to charge Home/EU undergraduates an annual fee of £3000 for all programmes, with the transitional arrangements as set out in the Higher Education Act 2004 and in subsequent documents.

1.2 In drafting this Access Agreement, the LSE has consulted widely within the School's academic and student community, and a broad consensus has now been reached. We have agreed to spend on student support one third of the additional income that variable fees generate. 'Student support' is taken to refer to all the elements of this Access Agreement, specifically our proposed bursary scheme, our other programmes of financial support, and our Widening Participation activities.

1.3 It should be emphasised that our plans are based on the premise that the income accruing from the new variable fees will indeed remain additional during the period of the Agreement, and that Government income from other sources will not be reduced. Any such reduction would necessarily threaten these plans and result in a proposal for a new Agreement.

1.4 We propose that the Access Agreement be valid for the intakes of students in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

2 Financial support

2.1 Objectives: The School's overwhelming objective when designing its new package of financial support was to maintain and, if possible, to encourage an increase in, the number of applications from good candidates from poorer backgrounds. In a very direct sense, it is a package designed to increase access. We were conscious that, although the new national arrangements lift the immediate financial burdens on students, they may, e.g. via debt aversion, dissuade some from applying. We therefore wished, as far as possible, to offset any debt aversion, or other financial inhibitions, by making as generous a provision as was practical.

2.2 The School, therefore, proposes a package of financial support made up of two separate but closely related elements:

- i an automatic income-related Bursary Scheme, and
- ii additional non-bursary financial support.

3 The Bursary Scheme

3.1 The proposed Bursary Scheme is by far the most important component of this draft Access Agreement, absorbing roughly a quarter of the expected increase in income from variable fees. Bursaries will be offered automatically to all students who qualify for full or partial maintenance grant on the basis of individualised information on them received from the Student Loans Company.

3.2 The bursaries will be provided on a sliding scale, and those in greatest need will attract the largest grants.

3.3 An important consideration is that the maximum bursary should, if possible, reflect the estimated 'gap' between the living costs associated with university attendance in London and the amount of support available to students from the Government. Given the somewhat imperfect information available to us, we expect to offer a maximum bursary of £2,500 a year to those who have the lowest residual income. This would taper to just under £1,700 for those with residual incomes of £21,460, and to zero where the income is £33,533 (see the appendix for a more detailed illustration of how the scheme is proposed to work).

4 Other Forms of Financial Support

4.1 The automatic Bursary Scheme would not meet all legitimate calls for financial support. We propose four additional schemes, the first three of which would be directed at the special needs of poorer and disabled students. Tentative budgets are given in Table 1 in section 5.

- i **A pre-entry Discretionary Support Scheme.** This would enable prospective students to apply for additional support to meet exceptional needs once they had been told of their automatic entitlement.
- ii A significant expansion of the **in-course hardship fund**.
- iii **Accommodation Awards** for undergraduates who live at home but whose domestic environment is ill-suited to study purposes and whose academic performance could be enhanced by being offered additional financial support to contribute to the costs of living away from home.

4.2 The fourth scheme is an extension of our recently and successfully piloted ‘**Job Shop**’, which provides information to students on part-time employment opportunities. The variable fee income would allow us to put this scheme on a more permanent and substantial basis. It would be open to all students, regardless of circumstances, but would be of special value to poorer students so we propose that it be part of the Access Agreement. It is concerned primarily with student retention, though it also has the objective of preparing students for later employment. Although directed at registered students it may also encourage applicants to choose LSE, and it therefore also has a relationship to our outreach activity.

5 Financial implications

5.1 The data presently available to us (e.g. from the Student Loans Company) do not permit us to make truly reliable estimates of the costs of the above schemes, so estimates have to remain tentative until the data become clearer. Also, gauging the demand for discretionary financial support in the new circumstances is very difficult. Because of this, we need to build into our plans a degree of financial flexibility to permit transfer of resources between the various activities listed above. But Table 1 gives order-of-magnitude estimates that seem reasonable at present:

Table 1 – planned expenditure on financial support

		£K
1	Automatic bursaries	1026
2	Discretionary pre-entry scheme	35
3	Additional in-course hardship	25
4	Accommodation awards	20
Total		1106

Note: These numbers rest on the total additional income which the School can expect from variable fees once the system is mature (in 2009-10); we put this at about £4.2m in current prices.

6 Dissemination of information

6.1 LSE will publish the outline of the bursary scheme in the undergraduate prospectus for 2006 entry. Details of the scheme, including the target audiences, how it will operate and examples of how much aid will be awarded, will be communicated to 6th form cohorts throughout the UK, via a leaflet and covering letter, in March/April 2005. The leaflet will also be distributed at UCAS fairs, careers evenings and will be inserted into all undergraduate prospectuses which are distributed after the approval of the Access Agreement. Furthermore, details will be publicised on the LSE website. For 2007 onwards, more detailed information will be included in the prospectus.

7 Widening Participation Activities

7.1 As was noted above, the School expects its financial support proposals to be a powerful weapon in maintaining and improving access for poorer students. In addition, however, we are proposing to put our other outreach activities on a much more secure basis.

7.2 Up to now, the School has not felt able to support its Widening Participation activities from its own core resources. Rather, it has tried, with considerable success, to secure funding for access initiatives from external donors, as well as taking full advantage of the relevant HEFCE money. This has meant that the scale of our WP activities has varied from year to year, reflecting our success in attracting external funding. We will, of course, continue to approach external donors actively to support WP activities, and hope that HEFCE money continues to be available. But, for the first time, the variable fee income allows us to make a financial commitment in this area from our own resources. What we propose here, therefore, is to guarantee funding for WP activities of £200,000 a year (by 2008, the end of the transition period). We hope to raise enough from external sources to operate on a larger scale than this, so £200k is a minimum spend. One clear advantage from this underwriting is that we are now able to offer our employees in this area a much more secure future.

7.3 Objectives: Our WP activities will explicitly target various groups normally thought to be under-represented in the university sector (e.g. poorer students, those from state schools, those from certain ethnic groups, those from families with little or no history in HE, etc). We have two main objectives;

- i The first is to increase the number of people who satisfy the above criteria to apply to study at the LSE; we would also hope that an increase in the number of applicants will also result in an increase in the number of registrations.
- ii The second is to help people from the above groups to raise their aspirations to attend university, and to attend universities previously thought beyond their expectations.

7.4 Our detailed WP proposals build on our considerable experience in this area and are a mixture of either new or expanded schemes. A brief description of ten schemes is as follows:

- i **LSE Choice (new scheme).** This is planned to be our main recruitment scheme to attract students from under-represented and non-traditional backgrounds in the Greater London area. It will build on the experience of the highly successful LSE Saturday Schools but will be more forthright in its aim to recruit to LSE and other excellent institutions. The scheme is designed to introduce the students to life in such universities, nurture their interest in their chosen subject, raise attainment, and guide the student through the application process. There will be preferential access to the scheme to students from state schools who have no history of HE in their family. It will be available for up to 150 year 12 and 13 students from the Greater London region.
- ii **Access LSE (new scheme).** This is designed to encourage more students on Access programmes to apply to LSE. Work is currently being done to identify a number of suitable Access courses with which the School could work. Access LSE will provide sessions on subject choices and application procedures, which will be jointly developed, based at both the School and in the participating colleges. It is expected that Access LSE will be open to Access students from 10 colleges in London and the South East.
- iii **Student Shadowing (expanded scheme).** Year 12 students who are considering applying to LSE are invited to spend either a morning or an afternoon accompanying an LSE student to get a taste of LSE student life. The session includes a lecture, a campus tour and a one-to-one chat with an LSE student. The shadowing sessions take place from November to March each year and are hosted by Student Ambassadors. Student shadowing will be open to 100 year 12 and 13 students from around the UK.
- iv **HEFCE/ESF Summer School (existing scheme).** The School will continue to run its HEFCE/ESF-funded Summer School for Year 10 and 11 students, selected by Aimhigher, if funding continues to be made available for such a venture. Students take one of five individual courses – Business and Finance, Government and Politics, Identity, Law and Society, Mathematics - and also participate in cross-course activity sessions that focus on team building and study skills. The Summer School will be open to 150 Year 11 and 80 Year 10 students from the London region.

- v **National Mentoring Scheme.** This new national HEFCE-funded mentoring scheme gives students a role model to encourage them to concentrate on their studies and ultimately continue their education to Post-16 and, by association, Post-18. LSE students commit 12 weeks per year to the scheme plus an intensive training and selection process. Mentoring is open to 180 Year 10 and 11 students from under-performing state schools in Tower Hamlets and Westminster.
- vi **ACE Days (expanded scheme).** ACE Days are an established provision by universities to encourage Year 9 students to remain in education to Post-16 and beyond. The School has successfully delivered ACE Days for the past two years and wishes to expand the provision to 20 schools. ACE Days will be concentrated in three one-week blocks in April and June each year. Schools can book up to 30 students for a morning or afternoon session which offers a series of interactive sessions led by LSE students under guidance and supervision from the SRO. ACE Days would be open to 300 student in Year 9 and 10 in the Greater London region.
- vii **School visits (expanded scheme).** The School wishes to increase the number of visits to schools. These sessions are not necessarily directly recruiting for LSE, although some sessions will focus on information about the School. Sessions will include student finance and budgeting, mock interviews, applying to university, etc. School visits will be made to 30 under-performing schools around the UK.
- viii **Primary/transition sessions (New scheme).** The School wishes to develop a scheme for Year 6 pupils which would dovetail with the 'Moving On' element of their Citizenship studies. Groups of Year 6 pupils would visit the School and take part in sessions to complement the concept of moving on. This experiencing of HE, at an early stage of their school lives, would be designed to be relaxed and fun, as well as providing a practical example of how older students have 'moved on' in their own lives. The transition sessions would be open to 5 schools initially.
- ix **Access and admissions officers (new development).** LSE proposes to employ more Access and Admissions Officers, to make offer decisions on undergraduate applications, thus raising the likelihood that admission decisions across programmes are more transparent and consistent. Furthermore, they will spend some of their time working with schools and colleges in order to increase the number of applications we attract from under-represented groups. This work will be carried out in conjunction with the dedicated WP team.
- x **LSE Mentoring (new development).** We wish to improve the support we are able to give to our students, especially to those from under-represented groups, both during the transition phase from school and later on in their university career. This is partly for objective reasons and partly so that we can be seen to be doing this, and thereby ensure that prospective students from the widening access cohort will know that their needs will be addressed once they come here. It is for this reason, that LSE proposes to introduce a mentoring scheme, whereby existing students will act as mentors for new students.

8 Job Shop

8.1 We expect to spend about £20000 p a on the job shop.

9 Access Agreement Milestones/Benchmarking

9.1 Both our financial support proposals and our WP activities share the objective of increasing the number of applications from certain groups, or, at least, to maintain the number of such applications at a time when competition for them is probably going to become more severe.

9.2 As an example, we have the following pattern of applications from state school applicants over the past three years:

Table 2 - applications for UG admission by school/college type

	2002		2003		2004	
Fee-paying	2300	29.7	2182	28.9	2039	29.2
Non fee-paying	5439	70.3	5372	71.1	4956	70.8

Notes: table excludes unknowns and unclassifiables; italicised figures are percentages.

9.3 As for other target groups, we hope that the combined incentives of the bursary scheme and the widening participation initiatives will increase the number of excellent applicants from state schools. We aim to increase applications from state schools by five percentage points by 2009. It is worth underlining, however, that we will not increase the intake of students from such groups unless the applicants meet our highly competitive entry criteria.

9.4 As far as quantitative milestones to indicate success or failure for other under-represented groups among applicants are concerned, we look to concentrating on social class and neighbourhood. For social class we propose to take the figures for UK applicants for entry in 2005 as the baseline and to increase the numbers from these target groups by the same proportion as for state schools. We think this is feasible because most of our widening participation activity is in London. The neighbourhood factor is less easy because we have no figures for applicants, only for students. We are investigating how to proceed, and if we are able to do so we shall apply the same proportion there too. In both cases we shall formally let you have the 2005 baseline and the targets when the data is available. We will also continue to monitor the future structure of our student body (proportions of those from state school, or from lower socio-economic groups, etc) on an annual basis to see whether there are signs of success.

9.5 For our WP activities we have a target figure of pupils or schools to be reached for each of the 10 schemes detailed above. In 2006-07, we aim to reach over 700 students plus student groups in a further 30+ schools. We plan to increase these numbers to 1000 and 50 by 2008. We cannot make a sensible comparison with our current WP schemes as some of the proposed schemes are completely new.

9.6 LSE plans to run three WP schemes which focus on encouraging applications to LSE or other Russell Group/94 Group type institutions, rather than merely raising general aspirations. It is possible, therefore, to set milestones for the number of applications we hope to generate from these schemes:

- i LSE CHOICE: of the 150 students on the scheme, we anticipate that 100-120 students will apply to Russell Group institutions, with 60-90 of these applications being made to LSE
- ii Access LSE: of the 10 Colleges targeted via this scheme, we anticipate that 20-30 Access students will apply to LSE
- iii Student Shadowing: numbers taking part in student shadowing vary from year to year. However, we anticipate that 80-90% of those students taking part each year would make an application to LSE.

9.7 As the remaining Widening Participation schemes are aspiration-raising rather than recruitment-focused, it is considerably more difficult to set 'application' milestones to these activities. The descriptions of the schemes (under 7.4) assign 'reach' milestones to the activities.

9.8 Data on the demographic composition and on the intentions of all participants on our WP activities will be collected, via registration forms and feedback questionnaires. Participants will be surveyed at the beginning of the schemes, to determine their intentions, and at the end of the schemes, to determine the outcomes and their University choices. The data, when processed, will be presented to the Widening Participation Steering Group (a sub-group of Council) for discussion on progress towards objectives. The Student Affairs Committee (a Committee of Academic Board) will consider progress towards LSE's objectives to increase applications from state school students, students from lower socio-economic groups and from low participation neighbourhoods, and will monitor the structure of the student body.

3 March 2005

Appendix

Proposed bursary scheme

Income Band	Student numbers	Bursary Amount	Total Cost
Maximum			
<33533	1510		
33533	15	84	1253
31338	19	366	6958
30241	23	508	11673
29144	21	649	13626
28046	19	790	15013
26949	16	932	14904
25852	25	1073	26821
24755	19	1214	23069
23657	19	1355	25754
22560	15	1559	23381
21463	9	1600	13854
20365	16	1600	24938
19268	29	1600	47105
18171	24	1600	38792
17074	28	1600	44334
13000 - 16000	81	1683	137009
9000 - 13000	83	1908	158627
6000 - 9000	88	2077	183474
3000 - 6000	73	2246	163393
0 - 3000	21	2500	51954
			<u>1,025,933</u>

