

## UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

### ACCESS AGREEMENT

#### 1 FEE LIMITS

The University intends to adopt the following policy with respect to fees for full-time undergraduate higher education courses:

- 1.1 A common tuition fee of £3,000 pa will be charged for full-time home and EU undergraduates starting courses in 2006/07 and thereafter (subject to 1.6 below);
- 1.2 This level of fee will also apply to foundation year courses and foundation degree courses as well as to all other undergraduate courses;
- 1.3 This fee will apply to courses of the University run directly by the University and to the following franchised courses of the University delivered by the further education colleges specified:

Foundation Degree in Complementary Therapy -	Bolton Community College Salford College Stockport College Wigan and Leigh College
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Foundation Year in Environment and Life Sciences -	Bolton Community College
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Year 1 of BSc in Information Technology -	City College (Manchester)
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- 1.4 The University places great emphasis on employability and placements are an acknowledged way towards enhanced employability. Accordingly the University will not charge any tuition fee in respect of full-time home and EU undergraduates undertaking placement years or semesters as part of their undergraduate course. When a placement covers one semester in a particular year of a course then a tuition fee of £1,500 will be charged in respect of the other semester.
- 1.5 Subject to clarification of the Government's intentions with regard to student support in such circumstances, the University will charge a fee of £1,500 pa in respect of full-time home and EU undergraduates undertaking exchange years as part of their course. The one exception to these arrangements will be in relation to students away from the University on exchanges for a year or a semester that are supported by the ERASMUS programme. No fee will be charged in respect of such exchange periods.
- 1.6 It is anticipated that fee levels will increase in subsequent years with inflation in line with regulations published by the Government each year.

- 1.7 For the avoidance of doubt the University confirms that the following cohorts of students will not have to pay the variable tuition fees of £3,000/£1,500 pa, but may be asked to contribute to the standard tuition fee (of £1200 pa) at the start of each subsequent year of the course, depending on the level of their household income (as for the current scheme of fee payments).
- a students who took a Salford foundation year course in 2005/06 and move into level 1 of the undergraduate course in 2006/07;
  - b interrupting or repeating students who started their course before 2006/07;
  - c students moving into the University on '2+2' style courses that commenced before September 2006;
  - d students taking 'top-ups' to Salford foundation degree courses in 2006/07 and beyond where they are progressing directly from a foundation degree course which started before September 2006.

## 2 BURSARIES AND OTHER FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- 2.1 The University intends to offer three major types of bursary from 2006/07 onwards.
- a the statutory bursary of £300 pa for those students in receipt of a full Higher Education Maintenance Grant (HEMG) of £2,700 pa and pro-rata bursaries for those receiving partial HEMGs;
  - b a bursary scheme to cover a range of essential course costs for certain students;
  - c international student mobility bursaries.

Each of these is described in more detail in the paragraphs that follow.

- 2.2 Students in receipt of the full HEMG of £2,700 pa will be granted a bursary of £300 pa by the University. Where students receive a proportion of the full HEMG they will also be granted an equivalent proportion of the £300 pa bursary.

Note: On the basis of the current profile of Salford students (which the University will seek to maintain) 44% will receive a full HEMG and 14% a partial HEMG.

The University intends to sign up to the model bursary scheme as devised by the UUK/SCOP advisory group. The level of these bursaries will be revised each year to ensure that any inflationary rises in the fee limit do not create a gap between the fee charged and support available to the student.

- 2.3 The University will offer a scheme of bursaries to home and EU full-time undergraduate students to cover essential course related costs. Students receiving a full HEMG will receive a full bursary set at £350 pa for all courses to cover the costs of mandatory field courses, essential materials for courses and external registration and examination fees. Students receiving a full HEMG on certain specified courses that have substantial additional mandatory costs:

eg cost of flying lessons on courses with Pilot Studies  
 cost of air fares on courses involving an exchange with USA/North America

will receive a further bursary to cover these mandatory costs. Students receiving a partial HEMG will receive an equivalent proportion of the standard £350 pa course cost bursary and (if they are on a relevant course) of the additional course costs bursary.

- 2.4 The University in its mission places considerable emphasis on the international dimension of its activities. In this respect there is evidence nationally that students from low income and other under-represented groups are the least likely to take up international placements as part of their courses. As indicated earlier (paragraph 1.4) the University also places great emphasis on employability and placements are an acknowledged way towards enhanced employability. Targeted 'international student mobility bursaries' will be made available to outgoing UK and EU students who are on a full HEMG and who take part in ERASMUS programmes, or international exchange programmes, or international work placements of one or two semester's duration. The bursary will be equivalent to the fee payable for the time spent abroad plus a cash amount of £500 for one semester or £1,000 for two semesters. Students on pro-rata HEMGs will receive an equivalent proportion of the full international student mobility bursary for their course.

### 3 PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS

- 3.1 The University recognises the need to ensure that all prospective students are fully informed of both the likely total costs of undertaking a course (fees, other course related expenses and living expenses) and the financial support available (state support, University bursaries and other support). The provision of such information in a clear and accessible form, alongside material on the benefits of higher education, is and will remain a key element of our widening participation strategy.
- 3.2 The University is developing an interactive section of its main website for September 2005 which will enable both prospective and current students to access this information in a form which is specific to their individual course and circumstances.
- 3.3 In addition the University will continue to provide printed information on both costs and financial support to students at each stage of their

engagement with the University. These arrangements may be summarised as follows:

#### Enquiry stage

The undergraduate prospectus remains the key source of information for enquirers (also available on the website). Whilst the 2006/07 edition (because of the publication schedule) can only contain provisional information on fees and financial support it is intended that subsequent editions will contain much fuller information. Contact points for further information will be provided.

A more comprehensive booklet, detailing accommodation options, course and likely living costs, student support arrangements, bursaries and specific support for students with disabilities and/or nursery age children will also be published each year and made available to enquirers.

#### Application stage

Potential students declaring disabilities receive full information on financial and academic support available to them. Offer letters will contain a statement of fees, other essential course costs, assessments of living expenses and information on the fee assessment procedures and the state and University financial support arrangements.

#### Pre-registration stage

A “welcome pack” is sent out to all new students during August. This will remind students of the actions necessary on their part to activate state and University financial support and obtain living accommodation (if required).

#### Registration stage

The financial status of all new and returning students will be checked during the registration process at the start of the year and information on sources of financial support made available as necessary.

#### Post-registration stage

The University has a Student Assistance Office which acts as a central clearing house for all student enquiries. In particular, it deals with financial support, hardship issues, disability support and has appropriately trained staff to give advice. It works closely with the Students' Union and its services are widely publicized to students.

## 4 OUTREACH WORK

- 4.1 The University of Salford has a demonstrated commitment, going back to its establishment in 1896 as the Royal Technical Institute, of reaching out to sections of the community which traditionally have not had close contacts with higher education. For over a decade it has been following a strategy of what is now termed widening participation. This commitment is embedded in our Strategic Framework, where one of the overarching goals of the Teaching and Learning Strategy is to facilitate access to our courses at all levels and provide life-long learning opportunities for learners from a wide range of social and educational backgrounds.

- 4.2 In 1993 the University established the FE/HE Consortium, a regional partnership between the University and 35 colleges to develop non-traditional progression routes into the University. An example of this is the Access Network, which has seen growth in recruitment to the University from access courses, from 4% of our home intake in 1998 to 12% in 2004.
- 4.3 Subsequent developments have included strategic links with nine of these colleges as "Associate Colleges". Through such outreach work the University recruits 51% of its intake from the Greater Manchester area, and 81% from the Northwest region. Over the past three years the University's performance has exceeded all widening participation benchmark categories. In 2002/03 for ten out of fifteen such categories the difference was statistically significant.
- 4.4 The University plays a leading role in, and has committed resources to Greater Manchester Aimhigher activities. For over five years, the University has run the Young People's University in the City of Salford – a three week summer school intended to raise aspiration targeting 1000 children per year from years 5 - 10, with over 80% of participants on free school meals. In collaboration with Aimhigher the model is being extended through the ten Greater Manchester boroughs. Funding for this has been from a number of external sources including Aimhigher. If Aimhigher funding is reduced post-2006 it is the University's intention to maintain the Young People's University to 2010, using funding derived from tuition fees.
- 4.5 Parents and careers advisers/teachers play a key role in influencing young people. Parents of students from WP backgrounds have major concerns about the value of a university education both with regard to debt and to the prospect of employment. Increasing the University's outreach to parents will enable them to understand the sector better and encourage them to recommend university to their sons and daughters. There is also a big demand from schools and colleges for training and updating in relation to higher education matters. This is particularly acute following the recent changes in careers provision for schools. The University runs an annual conference for careers advisers which is always oversubscribed. Expanding this and being able to respond to the many requests for visits and talks in the guidance area will increase the chances of higher education being presented as a viable option in schools with little record of previous progression to further and higher education.
- 4.6 The University will therefore also use its tuition fee income to follow up interest generated through the Young People's University. This will include attending HE events with a WP target, extending provision for enrichment activities, masterclasses and talks in targeted "WP schools and colleges" as well as visits to and from education providers. A more strategic and proactive approach to engaging with key feeder institutions will be developed.
- 4.7 The University has been the initiator of the Greater Manchester Strategic Alliance (GMSA), a prototype Lifelong Learning Network. The aim of the

GMSA is to support the Government's target that, by 2010, 50% of those aged 18 to 30 should have had the opportunity to benefit from higher education. The University will continue to work in partnership with the other member institutions, and with other organisations such as Aimhigher and the Higher Education Funding Council for England to develop a credit framework, a wide range of progression opportunities and appropriate new courses of study.

- 4.8 The University will continue to work closely with the City of Salford, its secondary schools and three colleges to raise attainment in the borough. It will invest funding derived from tuition fees in additional mentoring of young people and adults and to work with young people in targeted subjects such as mathematics, sciences, technology and languages.
- 4.9 The University has never regarded its commitment to widening participation as being limited to pre-entry outreach activities. It has always believed that it is essential that it has in place an appropriate and effective strategy to support all learners, including the increasing proportion from non-traditional backgrounds. The additional tuition fee income will provide an opportunity for us to develop and implement an improved, more co-ordinated and integrated learner support strategy, building upon a number of projects and areas of activity which the University already supports and funds in this respect. This will start at the "transition" phase from school/college to university and will allow us to extend our work on induction, mentoring, personal tutors and personal development planning (PDP). Developments from a project currently being piloted in one of our faculties (focusing on the semester one experience for students) will be made more widely available across the institution. Students are monitored and supported during this critical period of their undergraduate lives through the appointment and training of achievement coaches who also act as prompts and sources of information for personal tutors. The University will be able to refine its diagnostic assessment of new students and will aim to give students improved access to learner support in the form of study skills, written communication skills and mathematics, both through class sessions and on-line facilities.
- 4.10 The University remains committed to the encouragement of the most beneficial student experience for all our learners, including those from non-traditional backgrounds. It wishes to enhance the pastoral and academic communications with its students. All activities introduced in the transition period will be maintained throughout the students' programmes of study, with PDP activity as a formative learning tool. Retention targets will be linked to benchmarks and rigorously monitored. We will build upon the work already being undertaken to investigate the reasons behind students' decisions to withdraw from courses and to encourage students wherever possible to be confident in a decision to continue their studies. At School level, the University aims to take greater steps to co-ordinate its approach to supporting learner diversity, with personal tutors being able to access specialists in widening participation, PDP, equality and diversity and the accreditation of prior learning through referral to University-wide support and guidance.

- 4.11 Two of the greatest deterrents for students from low-income groups when considering higher education are the fear of poverty whilst studying and the fear of debt when having graduated. The University plans to encourage such students to apply by promoting the fact that we aim to produce graduates with the skills, creativity, confidence and adaptability to succeed in the labour market and make a meaningful contribution to society. Features of the Salford curriculum are Key Skills in all courses. Enterprise modules, work placements, service to the community through volunteering and mentoring, and international mobility opportunities. We intend to extend the availability of Enterprise modules and extend our support for work placements and international student mobility. We intend to further promote part-time work-and-study opportunities through the work of the Job Shop, based in the Careers Service; such opportunities will also extend students' employability skills. We will also encourage students to develop skills through other means, such as mentoring and volunteering, and we intend to work with our developing alumni networks to provide role models, mentors and case studies for personal and professional development.

## 5 MILESTONES

- 5.1 As indicated in section 4.1 above the principal measure of performance that the University will use to monitor progress in its widening participation strategy is the annual set of data published by HESA. The University currently meets its benchmarks in all categories and sets itself the target of continuing to do so throughout the five year period covered by this agreement.
- 5.2 To recruit 1000 students in 2006/07/08/09/10 to the Young People's University summer school, including a minimum of 25 children per year from each of the nine Greater Manchester boroughs (besides Salford).
- 5.3 To continue to build on the interest generated through the Young People's University by:
- a. attending an extra 40 "HE events with a WP target" per annum by 2009/10 (20 per annum by 2007/08) 52 were organised in 2003/04;
  - b. delivering an additional 25 (per annum) enrichment activities, masterclasses and talks in targeted WP schools and colleges by 2009/10 (15 per annum by 2007/08) – a doubling of current activity levels;
  - c. delivering an additional 30 (per annum) targeted initiatives for parents and careers advisers/teachers by 2009/10 (15 per annum by 2007/08), 5 were organised and facilitated in 2003/04.
- 5.4 Overall, the University will consider it has made an appropriate contribution to widening participation if the targets set by Greater Manchester Aimhigher are met and exceeded.

## 6 INSTITUTIONAL MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 The University's Widening Participation Sub-Committee will monitor fulfilment of the University's Access Agreement on an annual basis as part of its wider remit to both develop and oversee the University's widening participation strategy. It will report its findings via Teaching and Learning Committee to the University's Senate and Council. This element of the University's activity falls within the policy purview of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) who will engage the University's central Executive Group in the monitoring and review process.