

# ACCESS AGREEMENT FOR: HIGH FORCE EDUCATION SCITT

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1.1 High Force Education is a progressive and innovative small community of trainee teachers who are pursuing our course which leads to QTS and a PGCE validated by Northumbria University. High Force welcomes applications from all potential trainees regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religious affiliation or disability.
- 1.1.2 Our Management Group is committed to widening access and we encourage applications from all sections of the community being acutely aware of those currently under-represented in teacher training.
- 1.1.3 Ofsted confirms that our policies for equal opportunities and race equality are detailed and our policy for recruitment and selection makes explicit the commitment to equality of opportunity in the recruitment of trainees, and to widening participation. It maintains that "Good efforts have been made to recruit trainees from minority ethnic and under-represented groups."
- 1.1.4 However, as a small provider of ITT with 30 trainees per year, we are very active in our determination to widen participation and welcome the additional opportunities to facilitate our efforts.

## 2. Length of agreement

- 2.1 This agreement is for 5 years from the academic year 2006/07. However, we have committed to return to OFFA by May 2008 to seek approval for our monitoring criteria which, due to a lack of current relevant data, has not yet been developed (see section 7).

## 3. Fee limits

- 3.1 We will charge a fee of £3,000 for our full-time postgraduate ITT course from the 2006/07 academic year. The fee limit will rise with inflation (in line with annually published Government regulations).

## 4. Financial and other support

- 4.1 We will offer a non-means tested 'scholarship' of £500 to all trainees who fulfil the requirements of the course including attendance and punctuality, meeting submission dates for assignments and completing audits.

- 4.2 Scholarship payments will be made in 4 instalments of £125 over the three term course.
- 4.3 In addition to 4.1 above, we will offer a 'Supplementary Grant' of 20% of the means tested part of the maintenance grant awarded to a trainee to a maximum of £300 per trainee. (This is subject to confirmation that, of the £2700 maintenance grant, £1200 will not be means tested, leaving £1500 as the unit used in this section as the 'means tested part of the maintenance grant')
- 4.4. The 'Supplementary Grant' will be paid in three equal instalments at the beginning of each term.
- 4.5 We expect almost all of our trainees to benefit from this grant which is paid on a sliding scale with the greatest amounts going to the neediest.
- 4.6 High Force Education commits significant amounts of the time of the Responsible Officer to student welfare and we uphold this as an essential element of our commitment to broaden access, increase participation and retain trainees on the course. In order to make this service more robust, High Force will invest a proportion of the additional fee income to enhance the services further, including engaging the services offered by our validating body, Northumbria University. This will ensure quality and equality of financial advice for registered and prospective trainees from under-represented social groups and the support for recruitment and retention initiatives among a range of under-represented groups.

## 5. Publicising fees and financial support

- 5.1 We shall provide a range of methods to ensure that prospective trainees are as clear as possible about the fees to be charged and the amount of trainee financial support to which they may be entitled, including that provided by High Force Education, the Student Loan Company and by the TDA. These are outlined below:
- 5.2 The website contains a section on finance including fee and support information. There are examples given of how trainees in their individual financial circumstances will benefit from the support available.
- 5.3 This information will also be published in our prospectus and in a leaflet which we will be used in all outreach activity.
- 5.4 This information will be clearly articulated to applicants in writing at offer stage before they make their key decisions on whether to accept a place.

## 6. Outreach

- 6.1 We will seek to identify areas of under-representation in our trainee cohort, when compared to HE sector from which we recruit. If we identify an area of significant under-representation, we will seek to address this and may do so by considering whether there might be any effective outreach initiatives which could be directed at such groups.
- 6.2 We shall liaise with our validating organisation, Northumbria University, to engage their assistance using their specialist knowledge of SCITTs (Northumbria University validate and manage a number of small SCITTS in the NE region)

## 7. Institutional Targets and milestones

- 7.1 We do not currently collect data which would be suitable to determine baseline for targets and milestones around low income or socio-economic groups. However, we will wish to monitor the numbers of trainees participating in our institution who are in receipt of full or partial state support. We will also wish to develop targets around other under-represented groups if identified.
- 7.2 We will seek to maintain or increase the proportion of students in our target groups, but will only be able to set meaningful targets once data is available. Therefore, we commit to return to OFFA to revise this agreement by May 2008, with a view to an amended agreement taking effect from the 2008/9 academic year.
- 7.3 The TDA set recruitment targets based upon the proportion of Black and Ethnic trainees registering for our QTS with PGCE course. Similar targets are set for the number of male trainees registering on our course. High Force has been successful this year in meeting its target and we shall be evaluating the strategies used to ensure that we maintain and endeavour to exceed our targets in future.

## Monitoring arrangements

- 8.1 We will formally monitor the progress of the access agreement at least once a year through the Management Group who will report annually to the Board of Governors of the Lead School. Initial monitoring will be concerned with participation rates and the development of data on lower income and other underrepresented groups, against which to monitor. When specific baselines, targets, and milestones are determined we will look to monitor against these.
- 8.2 Our annual report to the Board of Governors of the Lead School will form the basis of our annual monitoring report to OFFA.