

**Keele University Fair Access Agreement  
November 2007**

**1. Proposed fees and bursaries**

- 1.1 In 2008/9, Keele University intends to charge UK and EU students up to £3145 per year in respect of any undergraduate degree course and for the PGCE.
- 1.2 Keele University intends to spend 20% of additional fee income on the Bursaries, Scholarships and Outreach programmes.
- 1.3 All students will be informed of the cost of tuition fees in writing when they receive an offer of a place at Keele: this information will, of course, be available in pre-application promotional material from Keele, and on the web site. When students receive an offer of a place they will also be invited to identify those bursaries for which they would wish to be considered (see para 5.1).

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Keele University has always occupied a distinct place in UK higher education. The University was founded on the principle of interdisciplinary education, sustained to this day through its Dual Honours two-subject degree programmes and first-year programme of additional modules. Although the demands of the student market, and the requirements of professional bodies, have led to the development of certain single honours programmes, 80% of Keele's current first-year students are taking Dual Honours programmes. Keele's mission statement states that the institution aspires to be the "UK's leading open, integrated, intellectual community"
- 2.2 Since 2006 Keele has charged the maximum allowed tuition fee for all of its undergraduate degree courses and the PGCE. This decision took into account: Keele's success in widening participation; its extremely strong graduation rate and high graduate employment percentage; the high quality student experience that we offer; and the need to be able to invest in teaching facilities and in our campus environment. Put simply, we believe that the value we offer students, our package of financial support (see below) and the support available through mandatory bursaries and Government grants will allow all students to take advantage of Keele's distinctive education and student experience and ultimately to gain a personal and financial benefit from that education and experience.
- 2.3 In keeping with our distinctive student experience, and building on the success of our widening participation activity in increasing access to Keele, we have developed a portfolio of bursaries and scholarships which spans: academic excellence, support for important work experience and study abroad opportunities, fostering of key WP links with partnership schools, and special support for medical students, those taking the new Foundation Year and for students from ethnic minority communities.

### **3. Widening Participation activity**

- 3.1 Keele is proud of its nationally recognised reputation for widening participation. Keele's widening participation work has been consistently categorised as "exemplary" by HEFCE and we also meet or exceed our HEFCE performance indicator benchmarks. Keele has received awards for the quality of its new media outreach packages.
- 3.2 Independent analyses have recognised Keele's strengths in widening participation. The *Times Higher Education Supplement* ranked us amongst its top twelve "Access Elite" universities and the Sunday Telegraph identified Keele as the only one of its twelve UK "Ivy League" universities that is also socially inclusive.
- 3.3 For 2007/8 Keele will receive £1.174M HEFCE WP and Retention Grant. This money is used to fund both central activities, including permanent staff in our Widening Participation Unit and in the Centre for Learning and Student Support, and centrally organised provision such as Keele's local outreach schemes. Academic departments receive funding pro-rata to student numbers which supports dedicated staff roles, such as disability support officers, and a wide range of awareness-raising and outreach events amongst under-represented groups, including taster days, master-classes and summer schools.
- 3.4 Keele has also attracted substantial external project funding, primarily through Aimhigher and Advantage West Midlands for a range of projects aimed at raising awareness and promoting HE progression (e.g. "Without Limits", a DVD aimed at parents in deprived areas, and projects associated with mentoring, Asian students, rural learners and mature students). We have received ESF funding for our Higher Education Summer School.
- 3.5 Keele intends to invest a proportion of its additional tuition fee income in further outreach activities to reach those categories of students for whom our bursaries are aimed, and to provide guidance and support for them and their parents in making HE choices. We have therefore invested, and plan to continue to invest, in: guidance for students, teachers and parents, particularly on financial aspects of HE study; aspiration and awareness-raising events; and campus experiences. We intend to develop annual plans for outreach, based on feedback from students and from our KeeleLink partnership schools. This will ensure that our outreach work remains of absolute relevance to our local and regional students and their advisors.

### **4. Bursaries and Scholarships**

- 4.1 Currently some 30% of our undergraduate students have their tuition fees paid in full by their Local Authority, and about another 20% receive partial support from the LAs. We are assuming that within the new thresholds over 50% of students entering Keele from 2008 would be eligible for full or partial support.
- 4.2 We anticipate that, with the new thresholds for full or partial support, 500 students per year group at Keele would be eligible for the mandatory bursary. The mandatory bursary will be paid to students after they have enrolled at

Keele in their first year, and in subsequent years after the start date of the academic year, provided that they have re-registered with Keele.

- 4.3 In addition to this, Keele University will continue to offer about 150 non-mandatory bursaries and scholarships per year. The bursaries are targeted at specific groups of students who are either underrepresented in higher education, or who would need additional financial support for entry into particular courses, such as Foundation Year and Medicine. The bursaries are awarded to student who are financially eligible and who demonstrate need through a written application. The financial eligibility criteria are as follows: UK students who are not in receipt of other public funding except grants and have a gross annual household income below £39,000. Many of these schemes will offer the bursary for each year of study, or for as long as the student engages with any relevant related activity e.g. the work experience bursary. The value of the bursaries ranges from £500 to £1000.
- 4.4 For 2008 we have added a new Care Leavers' Bursary, which will be given to all grant-eligible students who had been in local authority care for a consecutive period of at least six calendar months at any time from the age of 14. Unlike the other, competitive bursaries, the Care Leavers' Bursary is guaranteed in order not to place a further hurdle to entry to higher education for these students. This bursary will give a student £4,500 over the duration of a three-year course.
- 4.5 Other bursaries will become available to students after they start their course, and they will be evaluated for these, for example, alongside the interview process for the work experience or mentorship *i.e.* there will not be a separate process. Details of how students will be identified for the bursaries are given in section 5.
- 4.6 Keele also awards scholarships on the basis of attainment in entry qualifications. Full details of all the bursaries and scholarships are given in Appendix 1 to this paper.
- 4.7 Keele has operated its bursary and scholarship scheme for two years and is in the process of evaluating the impact on students. It is clear from anecdotal feedback that the awards have made a very great deal of difference to the students who received them. Keele's scheme was one of the finalists in the category "Outstanding Student Financial Support Package" in the 2006 *Times Higher Education Supplement Awards*.

## **5. Bursary allocation**

- 5.1 Every student made a conditional or unconditional offer from Keele is sent a pack of information and an invitation to visit the University. This pack includes details of the tuition fees and of all the bursaries available to students, and an application form on which students can indicate those bursaries for which they believe they are eligible and for which they would wish to be considered. For the Rural, Foundation Year, KeeleLink, Medical and Ethnic Minority bursaries, students are asked to supply a brief supporting statement against the criteria for the award of the relevant bursary. Decisions on these bursaries are made, and bursary offers confirmed in writing, before the date (determined by UCAS) by which students need to make a decision

on their offers of places. This allows students to take the financial support into account when selecting their universities.

- 5.2 Students will only be able to hold one scholarship based on academic excellence but students in receipt of full state support for their studies (full grant) can hold any number of bursaries. Students in receipt of partial state support with a gross annual household income below £39,000 can hold up to £5000 worth of bursaries in any one year.

## **6. Outreach Activity**

- 6.1 Keele will invest some of its additional fee income in outreach activity, concentrating in particular those groups who would ultimately be eligible for a Keele bursary.

### ***Outreach***

- 6.2 The outreach activity will be grounded in our KeeleLink Schools and Colleges Partnership Programme. This was launched in October 2006 and to date the partnership has 98 members, of which 49 provide Key Stage 5 provision and 90 provide Key Stage 3 and 4 provision. Sixty of the member schools and colleges are located in deprived communities with a high need for outreach intervention to improve aspiration and progression beyond compulsory education. The KeeleLink scheme allows us to discuss with teachers, advisors and school students what support and information they need and to tailor our outreach activities accordingly.

- 6.3 Keele has successfully run subject-specific master classes, and general information days, for students at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 and intends to continue these as a key part of its outreach and engagement work. These campus visits will be supplemented by Keele's new media resources for each stage: UniWorld (KS3), Futureproof (KS4) and Upload (KS5).

- 6.4 We will also continue the series of Health subject events, principally for Medicine and Nursing/Midwifery; these also include funding up to ten students' attendance on the Royal Medical School conference.

- 6.5 Keele will also join the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust with the intention of working with the full range of types of schools and colleges within this.

### ***Awareness-raising and guidance for gatekeepers***

- 6.6 Students will receive information about bursaries through a number of routes. The initial source of information will be through the University's undergraduate prospectus and a special web site, but there will also be detailed sessions, and one-to-one guidance, on student finance at Open Days and Visit Days. An information leaflet on Keele's bursary and scholarship programme will be available at Open Days and sent to all applicants.

- 6.7 The experience of the past two years has demonstrated to us that the outreach and information needs of our target students has changed substantially since we initially drew up our Fair Access Agreement. There are also potential changes in the external environment, particularly in terms of the

organisation of education in the region; it is also possible that Keele may wish to increase the expenditure on bursaries and scholarships. We believe that it is essential that Keele's outreach activity can respond quickly to needs. Therefore we intend that a proportion of the funding, identified as part of this access agreement, will be available for allocation against an annual plan of outreach and support to ensure that Keele continues to meet the needs of its prospective students.

## **7. Monitoring**

- 7.1 The 2005/6 entrants to Keele provided the baseline for monitoring increases in our recruitment from under-represented groups in Higher Education.
- 7.2 We sought a minimum improvement of 10% per annum on recruitment from ethnic minority groups, and a minimum 5% increase in recruitment over the first two years in each of the following: mature students, students from rural areas and students from target locations identified by GIS deprivation indices. The increase in recruitment from target groups in 2006 was 22% from ethnic minority groups (55 students), and 3 - 5% against sector performance from mature students, as reported in section 2 of the Access Agreement Monitoring Report submitted to OFFA in July 2007. We intend to build on those increases with a 3 - 5% increase year on year during the lifetime of this agreement. In addition, we will continue to monitor and report on the recruitment of students from rural areas and those from our KeeleLink schools and colleges which are selected primarily on the basis of indices of deprivation.
- 7.3 There will be an undertaking to continue to monitor compliance with the agreement and progress towards milestones annually, with a full report being sent to the University Council and OFFA, as required.

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## Appendix 1 Description of Bursary and Scholarship Schemes

For up to date information see [www.keele.ac.uk/bursaries](http://www.keele.ac.uk/bursaries)

### **A Bursaries for students who demonstrate academic excellence:**

#### **1. Vice-Chancellor's Scholarship - £4000 for each academic year**

1.1 This scheme is open to all students, and in all subjects; we expect that a good proportion of students from our target widening participation groups would receive these bursaries.

1.2 **Allocation process:** When A-level and equivalent results are available, the attainment of the highest achievers is evaluated by a panel and the top ranked will receive this scholarship for each year of study.

#### **2. Deans' Scholarship - £2000 for each academic year**

2.1 There are scholarships for academic excellence in any subject, based on A-level and equivalent results, for grant-eligible students with a gross annual household income below £39,000 only.

2.2 **Allocation process:** eligible students will be identified by income assessment and will be evaluated on their academic attainment by a panel. The top grant-eligible students with a gross annual household income below £39,000 will receive this scholarship for each year of study.

2.3 The University also offers Mathematics Scholarships for high achieving students who enter the single honours Mathematics degree at Keele. These Scholarships provide £1000 over three years but as they are very specific we have not included them in our financial investment from additional fee income.

#### **3. Lindsay Scholarships**

3.1 In 2008, students who hold Keele as their firm choice for 2008 entry (CF or UF), who have a gross annual household income below £60,000 and who meet their offer of a place on one of the following courses will receive a Scholarship of £1,000 a year for the duration of their undergraduate course up to a maximum of four years:

- Single Honours LLB Law, Law with Criminology or Law with Politics
- A dual honours undergraduate degree course which comprises one subject from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and one subject from the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

3.2 We will continue to offer Deans' Scholarships and Vice-Chancellor's Scholarships, but in order to meet our objective of widening the spread and therefore the benefit of scholarships the number of the higher value scholarships will be reduced. Overall, we do not expect the total spend on scholarships to reduce.

### **B Bursaries for students who come from backgrounds with little or no tradition of higher education**

1. ***KeeleLink bursaries - £500 for each academic year***
  - 1.1 Keele has developed a partnership agreement in order to develop closer relationships between the university and local schools and colleges (targeted according to widening participation criteria). These bursaries will be awarded to students whom their school/college believes are highly motivated and able, and where additional funding is justified.
  - 1.2 ***Allocation process:*** Students who apply from KeeleLink schools and colleges will have their eligibility checked by assessment of income information. Their teachers may be asked to provide information in support of their application. These students must have demonstrated good academic ability and motivation to study: other relevant information can include sports/drama/other arts work, community or school/college work or responsibilities, or alert us to particular family/social circumstances which would benefit from additional funding.
  
2. ***Rural bursaries - £500 reduction in cost of on-campus accommodation per year***
  - 2.1 The university recognises that there are areas of deprivation that are not in receipt of the levels of government funding allocated to inner city areas. Accordingly, 20 bursaries will be allocated for rural learners in 2008 so that they can live on Keele campus and so take full advantage of Keele's learning environment. These bursaries will principally be promoted through the Widening Participation Unit's rural Aimhigher project working in Staffordshire and Shropshire, although other rural learners, and those who cannot travel easily to a higher education institution, will be eligible. Rural bursaries will be available for each year of study.
  - 2.2 ***Allocation process:*** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for this bursary (see para 5.1 of the main document) will have their eligibility checked by assessment of their income information and then their applications considered by a panel. These bursaries will be awarded to students who can demonstrate that they would be unable to attend university without residence; we will also look at UCAS form personal statements for evidence of motivation to study.
  
3. ***Ethnic Minority Ethnic bursaries - £1000 for each year of study***
  - 3.1 Fifteen EM students will be awarded bursaries for each year of study.
  - 3.2 ***Allocation process:*** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for an EM bursary (see para 5.1) will have their financial eligibility checked and then their applications considered by a panel. Students will be asked to demonstrate need through their supporting statement.

#### **4. Undergraduate Medical Education bursaries - £500 for each of the first four years of the course**

4.1 Keele will allocate 8 bursaries per year to grant-eligible medical students with a gross annual household income below £39,000. This policy will support the university's commitment to Fair Access to medical education. These will be paid for the first four years of study at medical school, as additional support is available for the fifth and final year of this course.

4.2 **Allocation process:** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for this bursary (see para 5.1) will have their eligibility checked by assessment of income information and then their applications considered by a panel.

#### **C Students taking advantage of Keele's Foundation Year**

##### **1. Foundation Year bursaries - £500 for the Foundation Year**

1.1 Foundation Year (FY) course cohorts contain some of the largest concentrations of non-traditional students. This factor, combined with the cost of a four-year course, and Keele's commitment to develop additional access routes into the university, have led to 20 bursary places being allocated to FY students. The FY bursary will be offered for the Foundation Year only.

1.2 **Allocation process:** those students who have identified themselves as eligible for this bursary (see para 5.1) will have their eligibility checked by assessment of income information and then their applications considered by a panel. These bursaries will be awarded to students who can demonstrate that the Foundation Year is the most appropriate route for their entry into higher education.

#### **D Students who have been in local authority care**

##### **1. Care Leavers' Bursary - £4,500 over three years (£6,000 for a four-year course)**

1.1 Keele is committed to increasing the number of care leavers who enter, and gain maximum benefit from, higher education. In addition to a planned support package, Keele will offer eligible care leavers a bursary which will increase in value year on year in recognition of the increase in financial pressures of continuing in higher education.

1.2 **Allocation process:** those students who have identified themselves as care leavers who satisfy certain criteria and have a household income of £39,000 or less in 2008 will be considered for a Care Leavers' Bursary. We will keep this process under annual review, but in the first year we expect to award no more than five bursaries.

#### **E Students seeking work or study abroad experience**



**1. Work-based bursaries – £500/£1000 for years 1 and 2**

1.1 Keele has a strategic commitment to provide graduates for jobs which are important to the West Midlands but where suitably qualified candidates are currently in short supply. However, non-traditional students are less likely to enter graduate-level employment; research undertaken in the Widening Participation Unit at Keele has identified lack of confidence as a major contributor to the under-attainment of students from non-traditional backgrounds. Keele aims to address some of the difficulties that such students face during and after university by providing bursaries with a work experience element. Currently students are placed in local state schools, thus providing them with a wide variety of skills development and also providing role models for the school students.

1.2 **Allocation process:** students will apply for these bursaries after they have enrolled at Keele, and will be interviewed to ensure that they are suitable for the placement.

2. ***Study abroad bursaries - £500 for the study abroad year/semester***
  - 2.1 In the interest of allowing all students access to the full range of academic experiences, and indeed not to deter students from applying to courses where study abroad is a compulsory element, 15 bursaries will be offered for the year in which study abroad takes place (usually Year 2).
  - 2.2 ***Allocation process:*** students will be selected for this bursary when they apply for study abroad. Students from the poorest backgrounds will be given priority.
  
3. ***Widening Participation mentoring bursaries - £1000 for each year of mentoring***
  - 3.1 Six widening participation bursaries per year will be used to employ mentors and ambassadors who will be used to inspire others from similar backgrounds and support Widening Participation activities at Keele.
  - 3.2 ***Allocation process:*** students will apply and be interviewed for mentorship placements: bursaries will be given to the students who demonstrate the greatest motivation and commitment to this work.

**E Contingency bursaries**

Up to 15 bursaries will be allocated on a flexible basis according to any additional demand in the above categories.