

## **Barking College Access Agreement**

### **Introduction**

Higher education is an important part of the work of Barking College and is carried out with the following aims:

- To widen participation so that both more students and non-traditional students in the local area can access higher education
- To provide a progression route to higher education for those falling slightly short of entry requirements for bachelors degrees or who lack confidence to take on a three year degree
- To add variety and richness to the college
- To offer progression within the college
- To provide a progression route for those who have non-traditional qualifications for entry to higher education and particularly those who have come through the vocational route
- To provide professional development and research opportunities for staff
- To offer a higher education experience to foreign students who do not have the resources to attend Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- To provide day release for students who are working in the industry and therefore provide flexibility

A package of support is already available to higher education students at Barking College to enable them to achieve and progress in their chosen subject

This includes:

- Intensive tutorial support, each student will be allocated to a tutor who will meet them weekly and carry out regular one to one tutorials
- Smaller class sizes which are typically around 15-20 rather than the larger groups common in HEIs
- More hours per week of teaching (class contact) rather than the shorter contact hours common in HEIs
- Access to a well-equipped library with access to wider library resources on request and a dedicated library gallery for HE students
- Access to a quiet study area available exclusive to HE students during evening sessions
- Many experienced lecturers who additionally carry out external examining duties and therefore have a comprehensive overview of standards required
- Study visits related to courses, including London galleries and institutions and including trips abroad to gain experience of different cultures and techniques in other countries
- Each course has a course co-ordinator who receives one or two hours per week remission from teaching and there is a course tutor for each group
- Lecturers involved in higher education may attend conferences to hear or give papers, attend seminars and other events or undertake study visits as part of their scholarly activity

The London East area in general and the borough of Barking and Dagenham in particular is characterised by a lower percentage of the population qualified to level 4 than other areas of London and there the progression rate to HE for young people is

the joint lowest in Greater London. Growth in higher education provision is therefore actively encouraged. Barking College welcomes the opportunity to build on its renowned vocational work and attract more non-traditional students to its HE courses and particularly to the foundation degrees which are being developed.

### **Fee limits**

The fee limit for Barking College will be £2500 for all full time higher education courses

A fee **up to the limit** will apply to all full time designated higher education courses. **Additional fees will be decided on an annual basis.**

The fees will be clearly set out in the college prospectus, in the separate HE prospectus and on the college e-prospectus (web-site).

Prospective students will be told that the fee may rise in line with inflation for subsequent years of their course

### **Amount of additional fee income to be spent on access measures**

Barking College will spend a minimum of 20% of the additional fee income on access measures including outreach, marketing and taster courses. This is shown in the table at Annex B

### **Bursaries and other financial support for students**

East London in general and the borough of Barking and Dagenham in particular are areas of deprivation as measured by several indexes. It is estimated that approximately 50% of students applying to the college will be defined as the “poorest students” and therefore be eligible for the higher Education Maintenance Grant. Our proposed fee falls below the maximum grant and therefore no fee-related bursary will be necessary. However, due to the highly vocational nature of higher education courses at the college it has been found that many students lack the resources to purchase materials required or to pay for the study trips which are an important and vital part of many programmes. These include trips to galleries and museums for art, design and media students, theatre visits for performing arts students, trips to architectural features for construction students, visits to business centres for business information technology students and so on. Several of these trips may be to other countries and therefore have a significant cost. Therefore a sum of at least £200 per student will be paid into a travel and materials bursary fund to be administered by the client services department which already has experience of administration of hardship funds. This sum will be reviewed at the end of each year. All students, including part time, will be able to apply to this fund for assistance and the award will be on individual circumstances including household income and whether the student is from a group which is under represented in higher education, as most college HE students are.

## **Provision of information to students**

Details of the fees charged will be published in the main college prospectus and in the separate HE prospectus

Details will also be published in the HE section of the college web-site and on individual entries of the e-prospectus ([www.barkingcollege.ac.uk](http://www.barkingcollege.ac.uk))

The college will publish a leaflet setting out all costs associated with studying for a higher national certificate, diploma or foundation degree at the college. This will include the costs: tuition fee, college membership fee, typical costs of resources, books and materials, typical study visits and their total costs and costs of travel. It will then set out the amounts of support available including grants and loans as well as financial support provided by the college and any other means of support (for example college students are eligible to apply for grants from Jack Petchey, a local philanthropist). In addition it will set out information about the disabled student allowance and the application procedure. The vast majority of students remain living at home for the duration of the course but the leaflet will also say where to find information on local accommodation and typical costs.

This leaflet will be sent to all students enquiring about higher education courses at the college and will not be dependent on an individual requesting it. It will also be freely available at college open days and evenings.

## **Outreach work**

A major opportunity will be realised to attract more residents of the borough and surrounding areas who are traditionally suspicious of higher education and its value and also lack confidence in their ability to benefit despite having entry qualifications.

The outreach work will therefore include two main elements:

- Additional marketing to residents in the borough of Barking and Dagenham and surrounding boroughs to ensure that the main widening participation target group are aware of the courses available and the advantages of accessing HE courses in FE. This marketing will take the form of illustrated talks to groups including schools (10 local secondary schools with sixth forms and with whom there are already good links) and community groups particularly ethnic minority groups and those which have an educational function such as Widows and Orphans, the Disablement Association, Lifeline, East London ITEC, Osborne Partnership, Eselar Training.
- The provision of two types of taster courses. The first will take place during each summer and provide interested mature applicants with a taste of what it is like to study at level 4 within the college and the second will take place during the summer after year 12 for our own level 3 students on vocational courses to demonstrate what level 4 study is like. The taster courses will each be one week and will cater for approximately 50 people each in the full range of higher education areas run at the college: art, design, media and performing arts, business studies and IT, construction and the built environment and engineering

## **Milestones**

Summer 2005 Prospectus prepared for 2006 entry  
Autumn 2005 Information leaflet produced  
Spring 2006 First taster courses planned and advertised  
Visits made to local schools and other appropriate organisations  
Summer 2006 First taster courses run  
Support mechanisms put into place for September start

Other targets/milestones:

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
Percentage with WP uplift	69%	72%	75%	78%	80%	82%
Percentage retention	84%	85%	87%	89%	91%	92%
Percentage achievement	86%	87%	89%	90%	90%	90%

## **Institutional monitoring arrangements**

An action plan will be drawn up showing targets and milestones. This will be monitored termly at the regular higher education course co-ordinators meeting as follows:

First meeting, September, will focus on applications and initial enrolment procedures. Recruitment will be monitored by categories including ethnicity, age, gender, entry qualifications, income levels and family background. It will also review criteria for application to the bursary fund.

Second meeting, December, will focus on final recruitment data and retention to date. Retention will be monitored according to the above criteria and review reasons for withdrawal, if any. It will also plan the implementation of the annual outreach activities.

Third meeting, March, will focus on the use of the bursary fund, the implementation of the outreach scheme and the continuing retention rates

Last meeting, June, will plan the summer taster courses, review the success of current students according to widening participation criteria and review the level of fees for the September entry of the following year in advance of publication of prospectuses

The chair of the course co-ordinators meeting will report directly to the director of curriculum planning and quality assurance who is the senior manager with overall responsibility for higher education at the college and who will report the progress against milestones to the strategic management team and college governors

## **Track record**

Analysis of intake for the current year is as follows:

Male	54%	
Female	46%	
Asian	11%	
Black	20%	
Chinese	2%	
Total black or minority ethnic		58%
Total BME in Barking and Dagenham		19%
Total BME in surrounding areas		31%
Under 20 years old	27%	
Over 35 years old	14%	

Widening participation category:

Eligible for disadvantage uplift 69%

Learning difficulty or disability 6%

There is a similar pattern in previous years. In addition the intake on our Access to HE programmes which feeds into the HE programme has an ethnic minority intake of 63% with 6% having a disability or learning difficulty such as dyslexia. Therefore the college has an excellent track record of attracting non-traditional learners but feels that the additional funding will allow it to recruit even more from the local area and then to provide the support they need to achieve.