

OFFA Access Agreement

Institution: Loughborough College

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Signature of head of institution:

Name: Mr J.E. Mutton, Principal and Chief Executive.

Date: November 2010

Introduction

Loughborough College is a provider offering further and higher education courses across the spectrum of the curriculum. In particular, the development of higher education provision has seen a major growth during the last decade from approximately 300 FTE in 2001 to over 700 FTE in 2010. The college submitted its Higher Education Strategy to HEFCE in January 2010 and its Widening Participation Strategic Assessment in June 2009.

Vision

By 2011 we will be an Aspirational Brand with best in Class education and skills provision and Best in Class services.

HE Vision

Our Higher Education vision is to be a large GFEC niche higher education provider catering for the progression of students in key areas of curriculum strength and recognized by employers and professional associations for particular capabilities.

Mission Statement

Loughborough College will Partner Individuals, Communities and Businesses to Achieve Outstanding Education Training and Successes.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is to deliver twenty first century knowledge and skills, tailored to individual, community and business needs from a base in Loughborough.

The college originally submitted an Access Agreement to **OFFA** in 2005 and a revised agreement was submitted and approved in November 2007. This latter allowed for the college to raise its fees for session 2008/9, but in the event a decision was made to defer this increase until session 2009/10.

The college is submitting this revised Access Agreement requesting changes for 2011/12 for a number of reasons:

- To update our existing fee structure in line with inflationary increases and changes in the higher education market fee structure.
- To update our bursary strategy in the light of information gained and changes in provision since the application of the two previous Access Agreements.
- To update our fee structure in the light of the changing demand for our courses.
- To begin to position our fee structure for the major changes in future already announced by the coalition government for implementation in 2012/13.
- To begin to align our future higher education strategic priorities in the light of the future reductions in the teaching grant already announced by the coalition government.

Level of fees:

1. The fee level for the courses listed below will be £3375 for a full academic year.
The courses are:
 - All EDEXCEL validated HND programmes undertaken by full time study.
2. The fee level for the courses listed below will be £3375 for a full academic year.
The courses are:
 - All foundation degrees undertaken by full time study.
3. The fee level for the courses listed below will be £3375 for a full academic year.
The courses are:
 - All final year Honours Degrees undertaken by full time study.

The above comprise all the Higher Education courses in Loughborough College.

The fees for the above courses will be applied in the academic year 2010/11 as the last major revision of the **Access Agreement**, originally submitted to **OFFA** in 2005, under the existing arrangements and prior to the major changes in fee levels announced on Wednesday 3rd November 2010 for implementation in 2012/13. They will apply equally to United Kingdom students and to students who are nationals of any other state of the European Union.

Students who begin a full time course partway through an academic year will only have to pay a fee which applies to the remainder of their tuition for that year. This could occur in a course that recruits twice in the academic year, or where a student transfers from a part time to a full time course or where a student transfers from another institution.

Bursaries

In both the original and revised Access Agreement the college paid automatic bursaries on a differential scale according to level of course but without applying any income threshold factors or means testing. This has inevitably meant that our bursaries have not be specifically targeted and that we have paid bursaries to students whose financial circumstances place them far above the income threshold as published by the government through **OFFA**. The major change proposed in this revised agreement is to end the automatic bursary scheme for all and instead to introduce a more targeted approach.

The key principles underlying our revised bursary proposals are:

- That it is no longer practical or fair to offer automatic bursaries to all students entering the institution.
- That there is a fundamental need to target bursaries according to income thresholds in line with OFFA guidance.
- That the bursary strategy must do everything possible to maintain the college Widening Participation Strategy which inevitably will come under pressure in such current times of economic restraint and cuts in funding.
- That there is a need to target according to national priorities, for example in **STEM** subjects.
- That the cost of entry to full time higher education should not act as a barrier to those capable of benefiting from it.
- That the increased income from the fees strategy should be utilised to provide direct financial support for students, to enhance their learning and to bolster retention and achievement levels.
- That resources should be targeted towards under represented groups.

Bursary Levels

In line with the principles outlined above the bursaries offered in 2011/12 will be as follows:

- All students whose income threshold is £25000 or less, in line with the state support thresholds announced by **OFFA**, will receive an automatic bursary of £500.
- All students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant will receive an automatic bursary of £500.

NB Students will only be eligible for one of the above payments

- All students enrolling on a higher education course in a **STEM** subject will be entitled to a bursary of £750 irrespective of income and means testing.

All Bursary payments will be administered in the following way:

- An initial payment of £200 following enrolment in each year of study for the purchase of learning resources
- A payment of £150 at the beginning of the Spring and of the Summer Terms in each year of study, to provide general financial support, and to act as an incentive to assist retention, achievement, and progression between levels of study
- For those receiving either £500 or £750 the facility to apply for payments from the remaining £150 or £400 at a point after the start of the spring term. This could be used for the purchase of resources or as an aid towards the cost of educational visits or work experience placements

In addition to bursary arrangements, students will also be eligible for the following financial support:

- Payments under the Student Hardship Fund. Payments under this fund can help to provide short-term repayable loans, and offer hardship funds in cases of serious financial difficulty. Guidance notes for higher education students seeking payments under this fund are available on the college website;
- Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci funding for students undertaking a period of study in another EU state and/or undertaking a European work placement

Scholarships

The College will, in addition, offer scholarships to talented students in such fields as sports performance or musical performance. Separate criteria for these awards will be devised and students can bid for these. A three person panel will decide on the applications and the awards to be made in each successful case.

Outreach activities to be funded through additional fee income:

Context

As is stated in Paragraph 20 of HEFCE's Request for Widening Participation Strategic Assessments, a College such as Loughborough College which offers both Further and Higher Education provision has many strategies and operational practice in place which both addresses immediate Widening Participation Targets and also has a longer term aim of attracting younger learners to Higher Education.

Loughborough College School Links Programme

The School Links Programme was set up by the North Charnwood Learning Partnership in order to offer a wider range of education and training to local 14 to 16

year olds. The members of the Partnership are Burleigh Community College, De Lisle Specialist Science College, Hind Leys Specialist Arts College, Rawlins Community College and Loughborough College. Over 400 students from years 10 and 11 attend the college for one half day per week (one day per week for Sports Young Apprentices). All courses are accredited and students can choose from the following vocational areas: beauty therapy, catering, construction, childcare, engineering, motor vehicle engineering, sport and uniformed services. These students progress to a range of education, employment and training routes, for example, 82% of the 08/09 cohort moved on to further study and 10% to employment. For September 2009, the Higher Diploma in Hospitality has been added to the programme, with more Diploma lines to be added in future years.

In 2009/2010 the non-pay budget for this area of activity was £26,226

Community Outreach Activity

The college sees itself as a major partner in the local community and as such has committed a great deal of time and resource to this activity.

A member of College staff has, for the past two years, been Chair of Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood. This gives the College access to disadvantaged groups and issues within Charnwood communities. For example, HREC has recently appointed a development worker to engage with hard to reach South Asian women, particularly Bangladeshi, in the Charnwood community. The worker will work in partnership with Loughborough College to provide ESOL classes to these hard to reach women many learners from ESOL programmes have successfully progressed to mainstream College courses in such areas as the Level 1 leisure programmes.

During 08/09 the College piloted a Black African Peer Mentoring scheme in order to improve retention and achievement of Black African learners. This model was previously successful with Bangladeshi learners

The College is also represented on the Charnwood Together Community sub-group. A member of the College staff is on the Charnwood Together Board through her HREC role (see above) and the College Principal represents the College on this board as well.

Marketing and Events

The College devotes a lot of time and resource to marketing its provision and running events such as Open Days. In 2009/2010 the non-pay events budget was £6332 and the non-pay marketing budget was £85,607. This activity is wholly in line with all our widening participation strategies and activities and these events take place in College, in local schools and in other venues such as community centres.

AimHigher

The College is actively engaged in all AimHigher activities in its locality. It is represented on the Leicestershire Aim Higher Steering Group. It puts on widening participation activities such as tasters for local school children and takes part in the full

range of AimHigher Summer Schools, both putting these on in College and sending students to attend events at other institutions. The annual financial allocation received by the College from the AimHigher budget is currently £10,000 and this is used as a contributor to the range of widening participation activities described through the whole of this document.

Employer Engagement

The College is involved in employer engagement activity at all levels of its further and higher education provision, for example in the Train to Gain and Advanced Modern Apprenticeship initiatives. The progression opportunities available to successful learners from these programmes are very wide ranging and encompass Level 4 and beyond provision. The College is working hard to increase the number of successful Advanced Modern Apprenticeship students progressing to higher level courses in such areas as Engineering. The College has made a major strategic commitment to Foundation Degrees and has successfully launched in excess of 30 programmes, many with employers. These employers have on many occasions commended the College on its speed of response and flexibility in offering modes of study to suit the varying needs of those seeking to pursue higher level qualifications while still in work. For example the College has made a major investment in the technologies which allow for the blended or distance learning operation of many programmes. This work with employers has allowed many students an opportunity to access higher education provision which they might not otherwise have had, either on account of lack of opportunity or the demands of work and family life.

The institution currently engages in a range of activities funded through Aimhigher which is targeted principally at full time students in the 16-18 age range. This includes involvement in the Aim Higher Associates scheme whereby higher education students work with younger learners in the College. The target group are students studying within Leicestershire in sixth forms, 6th form colleges, and colleges of Further Education, including Loughborough College itself.

The institution also undertakes outreach activities within the local community, through providing bespoke courses and networking and partnership events. This activity, by its nature, engages mostly mature learners who come from within widening participation categories.

It is planned to allocate in the region of 10% of additional fee income to support further these two elements of the outreach work of the institution. The additional income would be used to strengthen engagement with local feeder schools and colleges through initiatives such as HE taster days, the provision of transport to enable campus visits to take place, and the development of promotional materials aimed at reaching underrepresented groups.

Loughborough College has excellent progression route opportunities on offer to learners. It has a major strategic objective of promoting of routes into higher education aimed at mature learners within the local community. The promotional materials for this key widening participation activity will be met by the additional fee income.

Information on financial support available to students:

Financial information will be made available to all prospective students for courses covered by this Access Agreement. The information provided will be clear, accessible and governed by all principles of equal opportunities in its message and import.

The information will itemise the annual total fee for the chosen course, any bursary arrangements and an indication of the other sources of financial support available to students. It will also include sources of advice regarding the general financial framework applying to students undertaking full time higher education studies.

This information will be on the **College Website**, in the **College Higher Education Prospectus**, in **Course Leaflets**, **Community Newsletters**. It will also be transmitted to prospective students at **Open Days** and during **Course Interviews**. During induction all students will receive a presentation from the **Welfare and Support** team covering issues concerning with student finance and welfare.

During the course students will be able to receive specialist advice from staff in **Welfare and Support**, from the College **Careers Advisor** and through using the available links and staff form the **Loughborough University Careers Service**.

Institutional milestones and objectives:

In the light of the rapidly changing situation with respect to student fees and the implementation of the Browne recommendations in 2012, the college has decided to update and alter the milestones set in previous access agreements. The aim is to reflect our changing strategic and operational position and to make the milestones more specific and measurable.

Milestone	Measures/processes	By Whom	By When
To publish and implement the fee and bursary proposals in the revised Access Agreement for 2011/12.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement approved by OFFA • Fee and Bursary structure published on college website and other information sources • Bursaries awarded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OFFA • HE Manager and Student Access Centre staff • Course teams and finance staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When approved by OFFA • September 2011
To devise and seek approval for a revised Access Agreement to take account of the 2012 fee changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To devise and get internal approval for agreement. • To submit agreement to OFFA for approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Manager, College Executive and Governing Body • HE Manager and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When legislation passed and guidance produced • When agreement

Milestone	Measures/processes	By Whom	By When
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee and Bursary structure published on college website and other information sources 	Student Access Centre Staff	has been finally approved by OFFA
To devise measures to meet the TQEI requirements for published course information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures devised and approved for Contact Hours, Teaching Patterns and Employment Patterns for each course. • Measures published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Manager, Curriculum Teams, College Executive, Governing Body • HE Manager, Student Access Centre Staff and College Webmaster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2011 • September 2011
To achieve a retention target of 85% and achievement rate of 50% for all Higher Education courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets fully embedded in all course and college processes – action plans and performance and standards reviews. • New teaching and learning strategies in place to enhance the achievement of the targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Manager, Curriculum Teams, Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards • College Learning And Teaching Advisor, Curriculum Teams, HE Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2011 • June 2011
To achieve an internal progression target of 15% of level 3 completers to college higher education courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target fully embedded in all course and college processes – action plans and performance and standards reviews. • Internal promotional activities to aid the achievement of the target. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Curriculum Teams, HE Curriculum Teams, Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards • Curriculum Teams, College Marketing staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2011 • Ongoing
To achieve an internal progression target of 50% of Foundation Degree and HND completers to college Top Up Honours courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target fully embedded in all course and college processes – action plans and performance and standards reviews. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Curriculum Teams, HE Curriculum Teams, Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2011
To investigate the provision of Foundation Year / Year 0 courses in line with the national higher skills and progression agenda.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course proposals devised and internally and externally approved. • Courses operating successfully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Manager, Curriculum Teams, Assistant Principal Curriculum and Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2011 • September 2012

Milestone	Measures/processes	By Whom	By When
To devise measures for evaluating our success in attracting students from the areas of greatest deprivation in Higher Education progression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of POLAR2 data to determine current rates of participation and to devise new targets. • Measures devised and imbedded in all recruitment activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Information Manager, HE Manager, Curriculum Teams. Support from local Aim Higher data collection staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2011
To update our curriculum portfolio and course offering to meet changing market demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New courses devised and validated. • New modes of delivery in place, especially distance learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE Manager, Curriculum Teams, Validating Partner Universities. • College Learning And Teaching Advisor, Curriculum Teams, HE Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • June 2011
To allocate 10% of fee income to the enhancement of outreach and other activities to attract under represented students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events, Summer Schools, Open Days to promote the benefits of Higher Education study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum Teams, College Marketing Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
To allocate 10% of fee income to the Student Hardship Fund for students to bid into for extra financial support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Student Services, Finance and Welfare Co-ordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing

Monitoring Compliance and Progress:

The institution will undertake annual monitoring of this access agreement to confirm compliance and progress towards the achievement of the milestones it has established.

Responsibility for the production monitoring report will rest with the **Higher Education Manager**. It will be presented to the **College Executive** for comment and amendment. The final signing off will be done by the **College Governing Body**.

The annual monitoring report will be submitted to the Director of OFFA following its approval by the Governing Body.

The report will incorporate the following sections:

- Financial data summarising recruitment levels, payment of bursaries, and other Financial support made available to students
- Outreach activities which have been undertaken during the year

- Progress towards meeting institutional targets and milestones.
- Feedback from students on the operation of the bursary scheme and any other matters relating to this Access Agreement

It is anticipated that, if approved by OFFA, this Access Agreement would operate in 2011/12 for new entrants and in 2012/13 and 2013/14 for continuing students. A new Access Agreement would be submitted by Loughborough College to OFFA for approval for revised 2012/13 new entrant fee levels.