

Newman University College

Access Agreement 2012

Introduction

Newman University College is proud of its successes in providing access to university education to students from a comprehensive range of backgrounds. It consistently exceeds sector averages and location adjusted benchmarks for recruiting students from under-represented groups including mature students, the proportion of students from low participation areas and students from families with no previous H.E. experience. It is a fundamental part of Newman's Catholic mission and ethos to offer a high quality, supportive yet challenging formative education to all sections of society. Overall, under the new fees regime, Newman will adopt a targeted approach in partnership with schools and colleges and will focus its activities on retention to benefit students irrespective of financial background.

The agreement has been developed in close consultation with the Students' Union

Recruitment of under-represented groups

Young full-time entrants	2009/10	2008/9*	2007/8	2006/7
From NS-SEC classes 4,5,6 and 7	Actual 46.6% Location adjusted Benchmark 40.4%	Actual 47.6% Location adjusted benchmark 42.2%	Actual 48.5% Location adjusted Benchmark 38.9%	Actual 45.2% Location adjusted Benchmark 39.3%
From low participation neighbourhoods	Actual 20% Location adjusted Benchmark 16.8%	Actual 23.9% Location adjusted Benchmark 16.5%	Actual 23.7% Location adjusted Benchmark 16.3%	Actual 19.4% Location adjusted Benchmark 14.6%

Source http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2060&Itemid=141

It is recognised that maintaining this high level of achievement in the future is likely to be challenging, due to the impact across the sector as a whole of the new fee regime. Newman's focus will be on improving the retention rate once students are recruited. Clearly the high number of WP students is a contributory factor to the lower than desirable completion rate. This is an issue we are committed to improving significantly and have developed robust plans to improve in this area through measures such as dedicated posts including Welfare Officer, Senior Academic Support Tutors, and Study Skills Tutors, a pre-entry learning course, close data analysis and partnership with the Students' Union.

Non-continuation following year of entry

	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
FT young first degree entrants	Actual 9.3% Benchmark 8.4%	Actual 12.2% Benchmark 9%	Actual 11.6% Benchmark 9.2%	Actual 10.8 Benchmark 9.2
Mature first degree entrants	Actual 16.2% Benchmark 11.7%	Actual 12.3% Benchmark 13.5%	Actual 8.9% Benchmark 12.7%	Actual 10.4% Benchmark 13.5%
Total	Actual 11% Benchmark 9.2%	Actual 12.2% Benchmark 10.2%	Actual 10.8% Benchmark 10.2%	Actual 10.7% Benchmark 10.9%

http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2064&Itemid=141

Fees

Newman intends to charge up to £8,500 for its programmes covered by this access agreement. Fees will not remain fixed, we expect them to rise each year in line with inflation.

Additional access measures

Newman will continue to invest significantly in its widening participation activities. As Newman has approximately 50% of students classified as WP, we have included proportional costs for key members of staff involved in retention and student support on a pro-rata basis, in line with items 37 and 38 in the guidance due to reductions in funding from other sources. Newman intends to spend over £550,000 on additional access measures in 2012, some 20% of additional income, based on an undergraduate tuition fee of £8500.

Information, advice and guidance to students across years 8-13 will receive significant investment through targeting our outreach work by working in close partnership with selected schools and colleges, and using non-traditional routes, such as youth clubs and faith communities. For example, one of our education liaison officers has arranged to work with youth clubs in the region to engage with young people outside a formal learning environment. We also intend to support a former National Challenge school, as part of our work with Bishop Challoner Catholic College which is also supporting the school. Specific efforts will be put into reaching parents and debt averse groups, and under-represented groups such as white working class boys and Muslim students, the latter through our Islamic Society.

The outreach work will include diverse activities, including awareness raising of university amongst younger pupils and interactive sessions to facilitate learners' research into post 16 and 18 options including university. We will provide IAG to students and their parents on the new student finance regime, particularly focusing on the repayment structure and the fact that no fees have to be paid up front. Support will also be provided for students researching university options, including sources of information, writing effective personal statements and interview technique.

Taster sessions will remain an important part of our outreach work, enabling disadvantaged students to visit the university college, meet staff and students and understand the differences between school/sixth form and university level learning. This will demonstrate the diversity of students attending university, the level of independence expected of students and dispel some myths which prevent application to H.E.

Newman's part-time portfolio will be expanded significantly. This will have several benefits for WP students, including lower than pro rata fees requiring them to borrow less from the Student Loans Company, and enabling students to work more hours than full-time students. The part-time route should also assist retention by allowing more students to transfer from full-time to part-time if they find full-time study incompatible with family and/or work commitments. A part-time programme leader post will be created, which will include pre and post enrolment IAG for part-time students, highlighting the commitments of the course, expectations of staff and students and ensuring potential students are appropriately prepared for study.

Contextual admissions will be introduced in 2012, using the additional data to be supplied by UCAS. This will enable us to more effectively identify applicants with the ability to be successful at university who have not yet been able to demonstrate their potential due to a lack of previous academic opportunities. Contextual admissions will be implemented across all courses, including the most selective oversubscribed degrees.

Improvements in retention

The proposals outlined below identify how Newman will invest its resources in activities designed to enable completion of their studies by distinct groups of students with very different needs.

Confirmed applicants onto a single or combined honours degree whose previous academic record suggests they are at risk of non-completion, or who are recruited as a result of our contextual admissions policy, will take part in Newman's 'Get A-HEAD' transition programme. This aims to promote academic and social integration through delivery of a 14 day pre-entry blended learning course and subsequent transition activities throughout level 4. The Get A-HEAD programme also includes access to on-line resources which students can access before they start university to enhance their study skills prior to enrolment. This targeted support enables students at greatest risk of non-completion to integrate academically and socially into university throughout their first year of study, but particularly in their first semester, which research shows is critical to completion.

Newman will invest in employing Senior Academic Support Tutors (SATS). Whilst available to all students, they are disproportionately accessed by students from WP backgrounds. The role of SATS is to provide 1-1 support and early advice and guidance (or act as signposts) on a wide range of issues, academic and non academic, which could adversely impact on academic performance and progression. This system has been piloted, and early intervention and support has proven to be effective in supporting students. 50% of the total cost of senior academic support tutor salaries are included in the Access agreement, reflecting Newman's high proportion of students from WP backgrounds.

We will further expand a pilot programme of writing mentors. This peer led mentoring programme facilitates year 2&3 students to support first year students in their academic writing, appropriate referencing and essay construction. This less formal support complements the University College's Senior Academic Support Tutor system. Evaluation of the pilot indicates that this programme builds the confidence of first year students, particularly those from vocational routes. The peer mentoring element of

the programme enables first year students to raise issues they would not feel comfortable raising with a member of staff, and are often reassured by the experiences of the year 2&3 students.

Study Skills tutors will also be recruited to work specifically with students with disabilities which impact on their learning, for example mental health problems, dyspraxia , or visual impairments. The Study Skills tutors will develop and agree strategies to help students overcome their difficulties and provide individualised support for students with additional learning needs. This will be followed by the development of an individual learning plan, and regular review meetings to monitor progress and enable students to develop their independent learning skills.

A student charter will be developed in consultation with the Students' Union, to clarify the expectations students have regarding the support and involvement from Newman staff. It will also set out the obligations students have in relation to attendance and engagement if they are to benefit from the opportunities and support provided to become effective independent learners.

We recognise that non-academic factors can also contribute to non completion of degree courses and, as a fundamental part of Newman's ethos is developing the whole person, we intend to invest resources in enhancing our welfare provision. This investment will develop additional partnerships with outside agencies, and facilitate greater pastoral care. Furthermore an additional Welfare Advisor will be employed specifically to support students with multiple difficulties who face barriers to staying on course and completing.

Greater use will be made of available data in identifying specific curriculum issues which contribute disproportionately to non-completion, and enabling appropriate action to be taken whilst retaining the academic rigour of our degrees. External consultants with expertise in this area will be used to ensure best practice from across the sector is implemented at Newman.

National Scholarships Programme

Newman will offer 28 national scholarship programme awards consisting of a mixture of cash bursaries, fee waivers and payment in kind. Newman will provide support in years 2 and 3, again through fee waivers or reduction in accommodation costs. Students will choose how this is allocated.

Where there are more applicants who qualify we will allocate NSPs to students who meet the following criteria until all scholarships are taken.

- 1) Household income under £25000
- 2) care leavers
- 3) carer for a disabled relative
- 4) Students who attended a low achieving school (as defined by the contextual data used in admissions e.g. under 45% of students achieving 5 A*-C at GCSE grade C or above including Maths and English. The exact measure will be defined once the format of the data to be provided by UCAS is known.)
- 5) Students with the most UCAS points
- 6) Lottery of all remaining qualifying students once the above criteria have been met.

Students who qualify for the NSP will not be eligible for Newman's scholarship schemes.

Newman Scholarships

Newman will offer up to 40 scholarships to encourage recruitment and retention. Qualifying students will receive £2000 in years 1 and 2 and £1000 in year 3. Awarded on academic achievement, we expect a significant proportion of these scholarships to be awarded to applicants from WP backgrounds. In order to be eligible for the scholarship students must:

- Achieve **either** a minimum of BBB from three full A-levels or Distinction, Distinction, Distinction from a BTEC National Diploma if you are studying a single or combined honours course.
- Pass all modules at the first attempt each year, achieving an average of 60% or above across all modules and progress onto the next stage of the course at the end of every academic year, to obtain £2,000 in year 2 and £1,000 in year 3.
- Be studying on a full-time undergraduate course that charges the full tuition fee and must have selected Newman as their conditional firm or unconditional firm choice.
- Be classed as a Home student by the Student Loans Company.

Targets and milestones

One of the key performance indicators in Newman’s Strategic Plan 2010-2013 relates to year on year improvements in retention on all courses. As outlined above Newman will implement robust plans to improve retention rates, based on demonstrable successes in other parts of the sector.

Targets for non-continuation following year of entry

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
FT young first degree entrants	8.5%	8.5%	9%	9%
Mature first degree entrants	12%	14%	15%	15%
Total	9.5%	10%	10.5%	10.5%

Maintaining Newman’s excellent record in recruiting students from under-represented groups is likely to be a challenge in the next few years, if, as predicted, a proportion of this student population are deterred from attending university by higher tuition fees. For this reason we expect the proportion of full-time students from low participation neighbourhoods and from social classes 4,5,6, & 7 to decline slightly from their current high levels, before returning to current levels towards the end of the forecast period. Newman remains committed to supporting access to higher education for all students with the academic ability to benefit from university level study and, as mentioned earlier, has increased the provision of part-time routes specifically for these students. Despite these changes Newman expects to continue to recruit above or at our benchmark and to significantly outperform the sector mean in recruitment of under-represented groups.

Targets for recruitment of under-represented groups

Young full-time entrants	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
From NS-SEC classes 4,5,6 and 7	41% Current location adjusted Benchmark 40.4%	42%	44%	45%	46%
From low participation neighbourhoods	17% Current Location adjusted Benchmark 16.8%	18%	19%	20%	20%

Newman will undertake over 100 activities per year in relation to outreach, including taster sessions, higher education events in schools, colleges and non-traditional settings, AIG and aspiration raising. This will include issues such as student finance and budgeting workshops with parents and potential students, researching university choice, student life, personal statement and preparation for interview.

Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

In addition to Newman's internal measures of retention and HESA data, Newman also participates in the 'back on course' project which recognises that sometimes, despite an institution's best efforts, students will leave, but the project will maximise the former students' chances of a positive outcome, including the possibility of a return to higher education. Secondly, the data collected for the research will contribute to monitoring and evaluation, giving the sector an insight into the measures that an institution can take to improve performance further. Within the management structure the retention targets will be monitored by the Learning and Teaching Committee, whilst performance in relation to recruitment of under-represented groups will be evaluated by the Equality and Diversity Committee.

Records and evaluations of all IAG events attended will be kept and monitoring of applications and acceptances from these institutions will be used to evaluate their effectiveness.

Provision of information to prospective students

Information will be made available on Newman's, UCAS and SLC websites, Newman's Facebook page will include finance information and a Q&A section relating to fees and support. A financial information booklet will be produced and sent to all enquirers and local schools.

Annex A: Access agreements for 2012-13: OFFA template for mainstream ITT providers (HEIs and FECs)

Name of institution	Newman University College
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Please complete this template, and the Excel return at Annex B, and return to us using the HEFCE extranet by 30 March 2012.

Where your arrangements are the same as for other courses, we would encourage you to cross-refer to your main agreement wherever possible, rather than seeking to replicate information from that main document here.

Part one: Introduction to your agreement

A. Your current position in relation to access and, where appropriate, retention

Please use this section to set out any specific issues or aims for your access agreement work in respect of ITT that aren't already set out in your existing agreement for 2012-13. This section doesn't have to be long; however, it will help us to understand what your access agreement is setting out to achieve in respect of ITT. You may wish to consider whether there are separate issues for undergraduate and postgraduate ITT.

You may also wish to cross-refer to the issues or aims stated in your main agreement, if appropriate.

Our current Access Agreement was drafted with all students in mind, including ITT, therefore no changes are required.

Part two: Fee limits, spend on access and financial support for ITT trainees

B. Fees you are proposing to charge for your ITT courses

Your access agreement should set out the tuition fees you intend to charge new entrants to a) undergraduate and b) postgraduate ITT in 2012-13. There is no requirement or expectation that your fee for undergraduate or postgraduate ITT should be the same as for your other courses – this is a matter for you to decide.

Our fees are the same for ITT and non-ITT. For 2012-13 the fee will be £8,400.

C. Amounts of additional fee income to be spent on access measures

Taking into account any new access agreement investment relating to ITT, as well as your existing agreement, what is your estimated spend on access measures as a proportion of your income over £6,000 per fee?

As a broad guideline, for undergraduate ITT, our starting expectation is the same as that set out in our original guidance on how to produce an access agreement for 2012-13 (see OFFA 2011/01, paragraph 39). For postgraduate ITT, we would expect you to recycle a minimum of around 10 per cent of your fee income over £6,000 on access or retention measures. (Note: we will be taking a holistic view when considering whether your proposed spend is in line with our expectations. In other words, we do not necessarily require you to ring-fence set amounts for undergraduate or postgraduate initial teacher training. You simply need to make sure that the overall levels of spend – including ITT – are in line with our expectations.)

We drafted the original Access Agreement on the basis it covered all students and made adjustments to numbers and income when asked to exclude ITT students. Our costs are therefore largely unchanged except for some expected expenditure on bursaries and retention.

Costs remain in excess of the 10% expectation.

D. Financial support for trainees

In this section you should set out:

- *what you plan to spend on targeted fee waivers, bursaries and in-kind support for a) undergraduate and b) postgraduate trainees in 2012-13*
- *the amounts of support and the eligibility criteria for new entrants.*

You may wish to state whether the financial support for these trainees is the same or differs from your existing agreement.

The financial support is the same for ITT and non-ITT students in terms of scholarships.

Part three: outreach and retention

E. Outreach and retention work

If you are proposing to introduce additional outreach or retention work in respect of ITT, over and above the outreach/retention work you have committed to in your existing 2012-13 access agreement, please include details here.

Alternatively, please indicate where your outreach or retention work in respect of ITT is already covered by your main agreement.

For the purposes of an access agreement, outreach work includes any activity that involves raising aspirations and attainment among potential applicants from under-represented groups and encouraging them to apply to higher education. This includes outreach directed at young or mature students aspiring to full or part-time study. We particularly encourage sustained, co-ordinated activities that work with pupils and other potential applicants over a number of years.

By retention, we mean the additional (new) retention measures you commit to put in place to improve student retention and success (ensuring that trainees from under-represented groups access the full benefits of higher education).

The outreach and retention work detailed in the current access agreement applies to ITT as well as non-ITT students.

Part four: Targets, milestones and monitoring

F. Targets and milestones

You may choose to develop specific additional targets and milestones which assess your performance in ITT over time – particularly if ITT trainees make up a significant proportion of your overall student body.

Alternatively, you may have targets and milestones in your existing 2012-13 access agreement which you now also wish to apply to undergraduate and/or postgraduate ITT trainees.

These targets may be statistical – based on how representative your entrants are and/or your retention performance – and might include annual or interim milestones to help you monitor whether you are making progress.

You may wish to include criteria around the numbers of trainees in receipt of a full or partial maintenance grant, as financial data will need to be collected to determine bursary support and the data will also be accessible through the Student Loans Company for HEBSS subscribers. You may also wish to consider the TDA guidance at Annex C which gives information on specific groups that are underrepresented in the teaching profession.

In this section, please state whether you intend to develop additional targets and milestones, or the extent to which you intend to use targets and milestones in your existing agreement which you now wish to extend to apply to undergraduate and/or postgraduate ITT trainees. Where you

have new or amended milestones and targets, you should set these out in your Excel template (Annex B) at Table 6.

The targets and milestones detailed within the current access agreement apply to ITT as well as non-ITT students.

G. Your monitoring arrangements

In your existing 2012-13 access agreement, you set out how you intended to monitor your fulfilment of your agreement. If you wish to add anything further, following the inclusion of ITT in your agreement, you may do so here.

No further comments.

Part five: Information to students

H. Provision of information to trainees

As set out in our initial guidance for 2012-13 access agreements (OFFA 2011/01), you must publish clear, accessible and timely information for applicants and trainees on the fees you will charge and any financial support you will offer. This information should make it clear exactly what level of financial support you are offering trainees in each year of their studies. As well as providing clear and up-to-date information through your own information channels (websites, prospectuses etc), you are also committed to provide such timely information to UCAS and SLC as they reasonably require to populate their applicant-facing web services. We will assume that this commitment extends to GTTR, where appropriate.

If you wish to add anything further, following the inclusion of ITT in your agreement, you may do so here.

No further comments.