

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH ACCESS AGREEMENT

The University of Portsmouth is committed to ensuring that students who can benefit from courses at the University are not prevented from attending because they face financial hardship.

This Access Agreement sets out:

1. The University's policy on tuition fees for full-time home/EU undergraduates.
2. The bursaries and other financial support available to students enrolled on University courses.
3. The approach of the University to making available information on financial support to prospective and current students.
4. A projected financial analysis, of student fee income and expenditure on bursaries, outreach activities and enhanced financial advice.
5. The outreach and support activities undertaken by the University which focus on widening participation and access
6. The milestones by which the University will judge its performance, particularly in outreach activities, and the ways in which that performance will be monitored.

1 UNIVERSITY FEE POLICY

For 2008/09 the full time undergraduate (including teacher training courses) home and EU fee is £3,145. For 2009/10 this will be increased by 2.5% to £3,225 and, for later years, annual inflation increases announced by the Government will be similarly applied to home/EU full-time undergraduate fees. The £3,145 for 2008/09 and £3,225 for 2009/10 fee limits will also apply to students studying on University of Portsmouth undergraduate programmes franchised to our partners: currently Chichester College, South Downs College and Flagship Training Ltd (HMS Collingwood).

The exceptions to this general policy are those programmes with sandwich placement years or approved years of study abroad. For the year away the fee will be £625 in 2008/09 and there will be a further inflationary increase to this fee in 2009/10.

2 BURSARIES AND OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

2.1 Income Based

We have a system of bursaries through which students coming from households in the lower range of incomes will receive an additional, non-repayable bursary from the University for the academic years 2008/09 and 2009/10:

Bursaries will be offered as follows:

- For students whose family residual income is £25,000 or below the bursary will be £900. This includes the minimum bursary (ie the difference between the maximum grant and the fee charged), payable to all students entitled to full state support.
- For students whose family residual income is between £25,001 and £32,000 the bursary will be £600.

For PGCE students, this support will be in addition to any other bursary support to which they may be entitled. The level of support available to students according to various household incomes is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Support for students related to examples of household income (assessed by the Student Loans Company)

TABLE 1a: 2008/09: continuing students (those who started courses in 2006/07 or 2007/08)

Family income bands	Government grant	University bursary	Total financial support (examples within scales)
Up to and including £18,360	£2,835	£900	£3,735
£18,361 to £25,000	£2,834-£1,729	£900	£3,734-£2,625
£25,001 to £32,000	£1,728-circa £820	£600	£2,328-circa £1,420
£32,000 to £39,305	Sliding scale from circa £819 down to £50	Not eligible	£819 - £50 (min grant)

TABLE 1b 2008/09: new students in 2008/09

Family Income bands	Government Grant	University bursary	Total Financial Support
Up to and including £25,000	£2,835	£900	£3,735
£25,001 to £32,000	Sliding scale from £2,834 down to circa £1,500	£600	£3,434 (£25,001 income) £2,100 (£32,000 income)
£32,001 to £60,005	Sliding scale from circa £1,499 down to £50	Not eligible	£1,499 (£32,001 income) £50 (£60,005 income)

Table 1c: 2009/10: continuing students (those who started courses in 2006/07 or 2007/08)

Family income bands	Government grant*	University bursary	Total financial support (examples within scales)
Up to and including £18,360	£2,906	£900	£3,806
£18,361 to £25,000	£2,905-£1,774	£900	£3,805-£2,674
£25,001 to £32,000	£1,773- circa £840	£600	£2,373-circa £1,440
£32,000 to £39,333	Sliding scale from circa £839 down to £50	Not eligible	£839 - £50 (min grant)

Table 1d: 2009/10: new students in 2009/10 and continuing students who were new in 2008/09

Family income bands	Government grant*	University bursary	Total financial support (examples within scales)
Up to and including £25,000	£2,906	£900	£3,806
£25,001 to £32,000	Sliding scale from £2,905 down to circa £1,500	£600	£3,505 (£25,001 income) £2,100 (£32,000 income)
£32,001 to £60,032	Sliding scale from circa £1,499 down to £50	Not eligible	£1,499 (£32,001 income) £50 (£60,032 income)

* based on overall 2.6% increase in government support

The distinction in state support between new and continuing students is a result of changing government policy.

For 2008/09 and 2009/10 for income between £18,361 and £27,810 the government grant is reduced by £1 for every £6 by which family income exceeds £18,361. For income between £27,811 and £39,305 the government grant is reduced by £1 for every £9.50 by which family income exceeds £27,810.

2.2 Local students

For students who enter the University in 2008/09 from colleges and schools in the state sector who have sixth forms who are within the University's travel to learn area, we will provide an additional bursary of £300 per annum.

The institutions are:

On the Isle of Wight - Carisbrooke High School, Cowes High School, the Isle of Wight College, Medina High School, Ryde High School and Sandown High School

On the mainland – South Downs College, Oaklands Roman Catholic School, Havant College, Fareham College, Highbury College, Bay House School, Portsmouth College and St Vincent’s College.

This offer will be extended to students progressing from the University’s own FE courses. This bursary will continue for students progressing with their study with the University in 2010/11.

- 2.3 In addition, the University has established its own hardship fund to enable financial assistance to be given to those who demonstrate need during their period of registration at the University. We anticipate that those groups of students who narrowly fail to qualify for either bursary are most likely to face financial pressures, and the hardship fund provides a flexible way of considering their needs. This fund will be £500,000 a year. Part-time students are also eligible to benefit from this fund on demonstration of need.
- 2.4 The University has established a Care Leavers-Foyer-Sheltered Accommodation Bursary. This will be £1,500 per annum in 2008/09.
- 2.5 The five-year cost projections of the above proposals are set out below in Table 2:

Table 2 Cost projections of proposed bursary scheme

	2006/07 Year 1 £,000	2007/08 Year 2 £,000	2008/09 Year 3 £,000	2009/10 Year 4 £,000	2010/11 Year 5 £,000
University bursary scheme	823	1,895	3,196	3,196	3,196
Extension to hardship funds	194	500	500	500	500
Local bursary	0	105	323	323	323
Total	1,017	2,500	4,019	4,019	4,019

- 2.6 Students on franchised full-time undergraduate courses offered by our Further Education College partners will be offered the same level of support as students studying in the University.
- 2.7 The University applies this bursary policy to all students ordinarily resident in the UK and Northern Ireland on HEFCE funded courses, paying the £3,145 fee in 2008/09 and £3,225 fee in 2009/10. Students from other EU states will only be eligible to claim the £600 additional bursary in 2008/09 and 2009/10, as detailed in paragraph 2.1 above, if they are on HEFCE funded courses. They will not be eligible for the full amount unless there are changes in legislation advised to us.

3 FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

3.1 Providing Information

Students who are considering entering HE must be aware at an early stage of the financial commitment involved and of ways of planning ahead. We consistently aim to ensure that prospective students and their parents have clear, reliable and current information on all financial aspects of studying successfully at this level. The University already provides information on finance to students and their advisors through all its education liaison and outreach activities, including the *UP for It* programme, aimed at pupils in years 5 to 13.

The means of communication which we use include:

- The undergraduate prospectus
- The Student Finance Centre webpages with distinct sites for prospective and current students www.port.ac.uk/money and www.port.ac.uk/moneydoctors. This includes an interactive support calculator/budget planner/expenditure tracker to enable parents and students to input financial information relating to their own circumstances to provide a clear, indicative picture of the funding and support they can expect.
- Information stand at annual UCAS fair in Portsmouth and staging of the “confused clinic”
- Specialist finance talks and information stands at all University preview days and Department Open Days
- The Guide for Parents
- Bursary postcards and posters. These are sent to and displayed in relevant institutions
- Care Leavers/Foyer/Sheltered Accommodation leaflet and focus groups
- “Its UP 2 U”, a mini prospectus and options guide for years 7 to 11
- Workshop sessions and activities including the budget game run at, for example, Careers fairs, taster days and within local schools and colleges for years 7 to 13
- Regular presentations at financial workshops in local schools, colleges and other local organisations, for example The Foyer
- Promotion and inclusion in the Aimhigher Local Bursaries Guide
- The “Guide to the First Year” finance booklet
- Information stand at Clearing / Parents events at the start of term

3.2 Information on total costs of tuition

We will ensure that, prior to commencing any course, all students are made fully aware of the tuition and any other academic costs which they will need to incur in order successfully to complete their chosen course.

3.3 Student Finance Centre

The staff of the University’s Student Finance Centre provide expert support and guidance to all students and have responsibility for administering the University’s own and other hardship funds, including facilities to provide short-term loans. This

means students can receive immediate reassurance of the financial support that they are to receive.

The University has expanded this service, including increasing the number of staff employed to ensure that increased levels of support can be offered to students and potential students. Financial information and guidance has been further developed and promoted internally and externally to the University. A fees and bursaries hotline has been established and widely advertised. Student and staff inductions are carried out on a regular basis. Events are run to assist students already enrolled on courses. These include budgeting programs and workgroups for students with difficulties managing their resources who require 'in depth' financial support and/or debt counselling. Preparing for life after graduation and continuing to manage debts is also included within the support offered. The Money Doctors service, which we launched in 2006/07, is aimed at continuing to develop and improve our students financial capability through events and financial surgeries. Students participating in the service are empowered to take responsibility and control for their own financial well-being and feel confident about dealing with their finances. We seek regular feedback on the services provided by the Centre and this can lead to changes that refine and improve the support offered to students. To order to ensure that the service continues to develop and meet the needs of our students, an additional Student Finance Officer will be recruited to support activity in 2008/09 and beyond.

Specific developments planned for 2008/09 and 2009/10 include:

- Continuing the successful implementation of a text messaging system to remind students of their workshop/surgery appointment, fund award payment dates and event and news items
- Further development of on line learning resources for all students on Debt Counselling and the processes required to manage this effectively
- Ongoing consolidation of the Advising about Debt elective for students, incorporated within the curriculum. This trains and educates students in first level financial guidance and debt counselling with the opportunity for peer work and possible placement work within the Student Finance Centre. This incorporates on line learning resources.
- Further enhancements to the compact agreement for Care Leavers to guarantee accommodation and rent contributions for both term time and during summer vacations
- Development of an appropriate monitoring and tracking system for students engaged in the debt counselling service
- Development of an annual Money Advice week for students and staff in collaboration with the Students' Union
- Enhancing the service provision through the process of achieving the Matrix Accreditation quality mark.

To continue to develop the excellent work that the University is doing to support students as recognised by the Times Higher award for Outstanding Student Financial Support Package in 2007.

4 EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

The table below (Table 3) outlines the assumptions concerning the amount of fee income to be spent on access measures each year, for the first five years of this access agreement. The University understands that both fees and therefore expenditures contained within the agreement are subject to annual inflation at a rate determined nationally. However, for ease of comparison all figures post 2008/09 are at 2008/09 prices.

Table 3 Expenditure on additional access measures as a percentage of total fee income, 2006-2011

	2006/07 Year 1 £,000	2007/08 Year 2 £,000	2008/09 Year 3 £,000	2009/10 Year 4 £,000	2010/11 Year 5 £,000
Total additional fee income	6,470	13,064	20,389	21,125	21,125
Bursaries	1,017	2,500	4,019	4,019	4,019
Additional outreach work	559	636	685	685	685
Enhanced financial guidance and information	316	491	547	547	547
Enhanced post-entry support	230	242	242	242	242
Total expenditure	2,122	3,869	5,492	5,492	5,492
Expenditure as % of fees	32	30	27	26	26

Notes:

- 1 The impact of students taking a gap year in 2005/06 is factored into the first 3 years' income
- 2 The expenditure in the table is in addition to pre-existing directly identified expenditure on outreach work, costing in the order of £500,000. This focuses purely on identified costs within the Education Liaison Team and associated activities and takes no account of wide range of activities embedded either within academic departments or other support departments.

5 OUTREACH AND POST-ENTRY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

The University embeds its commitment to widening participation and raising aspiration within all its schools' liaison and other outreach work.

5.1 Education Liaison

The University has a large dedicated education liaison and WP team which concentrates on pre-entry advice and guidance and general promotional activity to raise aspirations and increase attainment and student recruitment.

5.2 The *UP for It* Initiative

The University embeds its commitment to widening participation and raising aspiration within its schools liaison and other outreach work.

The team visits schools to engage potential students in the benefits of higher education and to advise them on their choice of courses. The team concentrates its efforts on children in Key Stages 2 - 4.

In 2003 the highly successful, energetic *UP for It* membership scheme for 11-16 year olds was established. The club, which is free to join, aims to raise aspirations, break down perceptions and encourage pupils, particularly those from areas of social and economic deprivation to see higher education as an attractive and accessible option. Many of the outreach activities are targeted at schools in Portsmouth and its sub-region which have below average educational attainment, as measured by GSCE/GNVQ results.

UP for It gives members -15,000 current and alumni- a taste of university life. It allows access to university facilities and has its own website, magazine, events and workshops. It is involved with all 30 local secondary schools and support teachers by providing complete lesson plans for specific curriculum areas and inspirational activities. It also provides holiday activities for pupils such as art, illustration and video production workshops.

We have developed specific streams of *UP for It* activity to target particular areas of need, and to take advantage of subjects where the University can provide clear added value to schools. Such programmes include *UP for Enterprise*, *UP for Sport*, *UP for Maths*, *UP for Health* and *UP for Science*.

It's UP 2U – a mini-prospectus and options guide for years 7 -11 was launched in the autumn of 2006. Accompanying lesson plans and extension activities are delivered in all local secondary schools. A second edition of the guide will be published in October 2008. The guide has also been utilised by other HEI's through Aimhigher partnerships.

Expanding a successful programme

The continued expansion of the *UP for It* scheme is targeted at offering an exciting range of activities to change perceptions and promote higher education to pupils from all backgrounds.

UP For Your Future

A continuation of the good practice emanating from the *UP for It* scheme aimed at years 12 and 13, recruited through sixth form & FE colleges and through communication with former *UP for It* members. Activities include presentations, subject specific talks and curriculum materials, advice & guidance, University visits, attendance at FE events and members' newsletters. A dedicated team of education liaison officers attend approximately 250 events per year within sixth forms and colleges, including 33 UCAS fairs.

UP For Juniors

Launched in 2006, *UP for Juniors* (operates in over 40 schools in the area) aims to inspire primary school children to aim high and to consider higher education as a personal option.

5.3 AimHigher

Complementing our *UP for It* work, we are also involved in a consortium of local HEIs in Hampshire under the AimHigher Programme. The activities include:

- On-campus (summer schools, taster days) and off-campus (outreach in schools and the community) aspiration-raising activities
- Aspiration-raising among ethnic minority communities and for disabled students
- Admission and progression routes with cross-development teams within each institution
- Information, advice and guidance (led by Connexions)
- Mentoring to support the transition to post-compulsory education.

5.4 Supporting students with disabilities

We are committed to support those students with a disability who seek to enter higher education and who may therefore require additional support. We welcome these students to the University and we wish to see them study successfully for their chosen qualification. We have established an Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre to assess pre-entry need and offer post-entry support. We envisage increasing the support offered through this Centre as more students who require assistance are attracted to study at the University.

6 PERFORMANCE MILESTONES AND MONITORING THE AGREEMENT

The University will measure its performance in terms of encouraging access by reference to the following parameters:

6.1 Expenditure from additional fee income

We will adopt as a minimum target 25% of the additional fee income to be spent on bursaries aimed at improving access and widening participation outreach activities, together with the provision of enhanced post-entry support and enhanced financial guidance and information.

6.2 Widening participation and retention milestones

Over the life of the agreement, we will aim:

- to exceed HEFCE's annually published location-adjusted benchmark for young full-time undergraduate entrants from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7

and to achieve the location-adjusted benchmark for low participation neighbourhoods

- to continue to exceed HEFCE's annually published location-adjusted benchmark for mature full-time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of HE and from low participation neighbourhoods
- to continue to have a lower than benchmark non-continuation rate following year of entry for young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods and for mature full-time first degree entrants

6.3 Monitoring the Access Agreement

In 2006/07 and 2007/08 the financial targets were comfortably exceeded. Increases to limits for eligibility from 2008/09 mean we are confident we will continue to exceed this minimum target in later years.

2006/07 data indicates that we have exceeded the milestones relating to widening participation and retention.

The Board of Governors has ultimate responsibility for monitoring the Access Agreement. The University's Student Academic and General Affairs Committee receives an annual report on the Access Agreement. A remedial action plan will be required in the event of a shortfall in performance against the targets.

SUMMARY

The University is committed to ensuring that the changed financial basis of higher education does not frustrate student's ambitions to undertake higher education. The University firmly believes that the measures set out above will ensure that the University's record of encouraging wider participation will be enhanced.