

# **STOCKPORT COLLEGE**

## **Access Agreement 2008-9**

### **1. Introduction**

The Corporation of Stockport College agreed to the introduction of tuition fees above the standard level for directly funded courses from September 2006. Under the Higher Education Act 2004 the College is therefore required to produce an access agreement which sets out how it will safeguard and promote safe access in subsequent years.

### **2. Fees**

#### **2.1 Full Time Students.**

It is proposed to charge all students on full time degree and Higher National Diploma programmes a top-up fee of £2750, an increase of £190 on the amount charged in 2007-8.

#### **2.2 Part Time Students.**

Students on part time degree programmes and Higher National Certificate programmes will not be charged a top-up fee from September 2008 other than the normal cost of living rise in fees. This position will be reviewed annually.

#### **2.3 Publicising Fees**

The College proposes to use a number of methods to publicise fees and the associated bursaries and support. The key ones are:

- An insert in all prospectuses already printed indicating the level of fee to be charged from September 2008.
- Information on fees and bursaries will be published on the College website regularly.
- Through information packs prepared for all prospective students
- Through information sessions to be held with prospective students progressing internally and in year 12 of Stockport schools.

### **3. Use of Additional Fee Income**

The table on the cover of the access agreement Annex B shows the level of income anticipated from the additional fee income over the period of the agreement. The additional fees will be used to:

- (i) provide a flat rate bursary for students with household income levels of less than £60,000.
- (ii) provide direct support for students during their study at the College.
- (iii) Invest in the Higher Education infrastructure of the College to provide resources for both staff and students which will enhance the HE experience.

#### **4. Bursaries**

The additional fees allow the College to offer a flat rate bursary of £1,000 for students with a household income of less than £60,000 from September 2008. This bursary is paid in two instalments through the Student Loan Company using the local authority income assessment tool. This level of bursary will be offered to all new students from September 2008.

#### **5. Other Financial Support**

A limited means tested hardship fund will also be available to all students who can demonstrate an urgent need for assistance. This will be administered through the College's Student Admissions and Support unit using existing procedures. Currently the College runs a limited hardship fund which is often undersubscribed. The greater awareness raised by the full package being offered will overcome any barriers which may exist.

#### **6. Learning Support**

- Of the additional income generated from top-up fees approximately 50% will be invested in learning support. This will include activities such as learning mentors, specialist resource facilities and equipment, study skills support and personal support. This activity will be managed through the college's central learning support services and the associated curriculum areas.

#### **8. Milestones**

The College plans on improving recruitment by 2% year on year over a planned three year period. Retention and achievement are also targeted to improve with an associated increase in success rates of 2%.

#### **9. Monitoring, Evaluation and reporting**

Monitoring will be at least termly culminating in an annual evaluation report from Student Admissions and Support sent to the Senior Leadership Team. The report will cover:

- Number of students eligible for bursaries
- Number of students accessing learning support
- Corresponding retention and achievement rates

The Senior Leadership Team will determine any actions required as a result of the report and propose changes. If the proposed changes have an impact on the access agreement this will need to be ratified by the College's Corporation prior to submission to OFFA for agreement.

The termly monitoring will fall in line with normal College quality control procedures such as SLT, Quality Boards, 1-1's etc.