

# **ACCESS AGREEMENT**

**2010/11**

August 2009

This access agreement is intended to cover a one year period from September 2010 entry.

It covers

- Full time University of Bolton undergraduate HE certificate, diploma, foundation degree and first degree courses
- Full time University of Bolton HE Foundation year
- Full time University of Bolton undergraduate sandwich degree courses
- Full time undergraduate courses delivered in collaboration with other providers in the UK under a franchise arrangement, where the University receives direct funding
- Full time University of Bolton PGDE/ PDE courses
- Courses validated by the University of Bolton and delivered by a partner institution, where the partner receives indirect funding from HEFCE via the University

It **does not** cover

- Courses funded under contract by the Department of Health
- Courses validated by the University of Bolton and delivered by a partner institution, but where the partner receives direct funding from HEFCE

## **1 The University of Bolton**

The University of Bolton came into being in January 2005 when the Privy Council gave approval for Bolton Institute of Higher Education's choice of university title. At the University of Bolton we are a community of professionals committed to developing our students for their professional lives. Our staff are highly qualified and many have professional experience. Our teaching quality has consistently won the highest ratings possible from the Government's quality assurance agency and we have professional accreditation for more than 30 of our teaching programmes. We offer a full and challenging range of courses – from HNDs and foundation degrees to undergraduate, Masters, MPhil and PhD research degrees. We also have Continuing Professional Development and Short Courses to offer.

## **2 Our record of widening participation and inclusion**

We pride ourselves on our record as an institution committed to promoting social inclusion by providing high quality higher education for a diverse community. We believe in providing opportunity for all who can benefit from higher education, regardless of age, gender, race, disability or social background. We are a sector leader in supporting students from all backgrounds and age groups to achieve excellent academic results and career success. We provide a wide range of progression opportunities to allow individuals and communities to reach their full potential. Our portfolio of programmes is designed to promote accessibility and encourage progression. Most courses are available full and part-time; we offer multiple entry points throughout the year; the timetable operates flexibly from 9am to 9pm enabling students to combine their studies with work and family commitments; increasingly programmes are delivered at a distance, in the workplace or in partnership with key sectors, professional bodies and employers to support workforce development and the skills needs of the region.

The results of our commitment to widening participation and promoting access are evident from our student profile. The most recent Performance Indicators show that our student population is one of the most socially inclusive of any higher education in the country.

**Table 1a**

| Young full time first degree entrants   | 2007/08 |                    |        |
|---|---------|--------------------|--------|
|   | Bolton  | Bolton's Benchmark | All UK |
| State Schools                           | 98.6%   | 95.2%              | 88%    |
| Low Social Class (NS – SEC 4, 5, 6 & 7) | 42.2%   | 37.3%              | 29.5%  |
| Low participation neighbourhoods        | 19.4%   | 15.9%              | 9.7%   |

**Table 1b**

| Young full time other undergraduate entrants | 2007/08 |                    |        |
|--|---------|--------------------|--------|
|  | Bolton  | Bolton's Benchmark | All UK |
| State Schools                                | 98.4%   | 98.4%              | 96.8%  |
| Low social class (NS – SEC 4, 5, 6 & 7)      | 39.6%   | 41.7%              | 41.2%  |
| Low participation neighbourhoods             | 13.4%   | 19.7%              | 15.9%  |

**Table 2a**

| Mature full time undergraduate entrants   | 2007/08 |                    |        |
|---|---------|--------------------|--------|
|   | Bolton  | Bolton's Benchmark | All UK |
| Proportion of mature students   | 46%     |                    | 22%    |
| Proportion of mature students with no previous HE and from low participation neighbourhoods | 17.7%   | 18.6%              | 11.5%  |

**Table 2b**

| Part-time undergraduates  | 2007/08 |                    |        |
|---|---------|--------------------|--------|
|   | Bolton  | Bolton's Benchmark | All UK |
| Proportion of all students (mature and young) with no previous HE and from low participation neighbourhoods | 9%      | 8.7%               | 7.2%   |

Our distinctive regional mission in providing access to higher education for under-represented groups is demonstrated by a number of additional characteristics of Bolton students:

- 52% of our UK students in 2007/08 studied part time
- 7.2% of our full-time UK undergraduate students were in receipt of Disabled Student Allowance in 2007/08 compared to 4.5% for the UK overall
- 61% of our UK student population in 2007/08 were mature students
- 22% of the total intake in 2007/08 were recruited from the ethnic minority communities

The inclusivity of our student population has created challenges for us in terms of retention and progression and the University recognises the importance of improving continuation and completion rates. Our research indicates that applicants who have made a planned and considered choice to enter HE are more likely to be successful. Our access policies are designed to ensure students are academically prepared and to encourage them to think more carefully about the benefits and implications of undertaking an HE course.

We recognize that the acquisition of a university title for Bolton in 2005 and the impact of increased outreach activity by other higher education institutions who have further to go in increasing the participation of underrepresented groups in their own institutions, may lead to our student profile moving closer to our benchmark and the average for a 'new' university. Nevertheless, we remain committed to meeting the learning needs of the individuals and the diverse communities we serve and will continue to play a leading and active part in raising aspiration and encouraging progression to higher education in the region.

### **3. Bursaries and other financial support for undergraduate students**

We have set aside one third of the additional income we expect to receive from the increase in tuition fees to provide financial support for undergraduate students, to cover the cost of targeted outreach activity and to cover the cost of administration.

We intend to provide several kinds of financial support to University of Bolton undergraduate students who are eligible for all awards subject to the conditions specified. Students who commence their studies in January/February and attend for one semester will receive 50% of the normal entitlement. Unless stated otherwise, we expect to make payments by two instalments in January and May

Bursaries and Scholarships will only be paid to the students studying their first HE level course.

The levels of support are indicated in Appendix 2

#### **a) Bolton Bursary**

The Bolton Bursary will be payable to students in attendance at University of Bolton on or after 1 December.

#### **b) Bolton Scholarship**

Bolton Scholarships are designed to support the development of strong and well supported progression routes into higher education and to encourage students wishing to enter higher education to make considered and well informed decisions about implications of undertaking a full time higher education course.

Scholarships will be awarded to all UK University of Bolton undergraduate students, irrespective of their financial means, who progress to a University of Bolton undergraduate HE course having successfully completed an approved preparatory course or period of study at

- a partner institution who has entered into a progression accord with the University of Bolton
- the University of Bolton

In order to be eligible for a full Scholarship, applicants must be in receipt of either a conditional or unconditional offer of a place which they have firmly accepted by 1 August for September of the year of entry or by 1 January for February entry. Eligible students who firmly accept after 1 August receive 50% of the scholarship in year 1 and 100% of the scholarship in subsequent years

We currently deliver a range of programmes in collaboration with a number of partner organizations based in Greater Manchester/West Pennine/East Lancashire areas. We will be seeking to strengthen these existing links by

entering into a progression accord with each partner to provide a framework for the two institutions to work together to encourage and facilitate the progression of students. We will also seek to develop our network of partner organizations by developing closer relationships (leading to progression accords) with other colleges and schools in the North Manchester/West Pennine area. Current partners can be found at <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/ProspectiveStudents/Undergraduate/Finance/UgFtFinance/ScholarshipPartners.aspx>

### **c) Excellence Scholarship**

The Excellence Scholarship will be awarded to all UK University of Bolton undergraduate students, irrespective of their financial means, who progress to a University of Bolton undergraduate HE course having successfully accumulated a minimum of 300 UCAS points at the A2 level (or equivalent)

The Excellence Scholarship will be payable to students in attendance on or after 1 December.

### **d) Vice-Chancellor's Award**

The Vice-Chancellor's Award will be awarded to the most outstanding academically-gifted UK University of Bolton undergraduate students, irrespective of their financial means, who progress to a University of Bolton undergraduate HE course.

There will be a maximum of 3 awards per year

Payments will be paid in 8 monthly instalments from November

### **e) Care Leavers Scholarship**

The Care Leavers Scholarship will be awarded to UK University of Bolton undergraduate students leaving a Care background, irrespective of their financial means, who progress to a University of Bolton undergraduate HE course.

Payments will be paid in 8 monthly instalments from November

## **PGCE/Cert Ed Students**

In view of the financial support being made available to trainee teachers, the University has decided to charge a lower tuition fee (see Appendix 1) and not to make available any of the above bursaries and scholarships.

### **Provision of information to students**

We will provide full information to students, parents and advisers about costs involved in undertaking a full time higher education course and the financial support which will be available from the Government, through student loans or from the University of Bolton. Details of the level of tuition fees and other living costs, government maintenance support, including access to learning funds, and the Bolton Bursary will be available

- on the University's website
- in the prospectus or equivalent
- from student advisers located in the Student Centre and the Student Union Advice Unit
- at Open Days, HE Fairs and during visits to schools and colleges

We will guarantee a personal interview for all prospective students who wish to discuss the financial implications of entering higher education.

We will provide information to eligible students about the Bolton Scholarship through more targeted publicity aimed at eligible students. We will work closely with partner institutions to develop strategies to familiarize students and their families about the benefits and costs of higher education.



#### **4. Outreach activities**

The University engages in a wide range of activities designed to raise aspiration and attainment among under-represented groups and to develop progression routes into higher education particularly for vocational learners. These activities include:

- **Aimhigher**

- The University is an active partner in Aimhigher Greater Manchester and leads on significant projects for the partnership. Institutional resources are committed to this work in the form of staff, project overheads and other costs which are, by agreement with Aimhigher, not recharged to the partnership. In addition, a number of key members of staff are actively involved in Aimhigher working groups and project steering groups. Currently Aimhigher Greater Manchester part-funds an Aimhigher coordinator post in each partner HEI whilst we cover the remaining costs. Working with the Aimhigher partnership adds value to and extends the scope of our outreach activities. Our links with schools and colleges across Greater Manchester have increased and activities which involve all higher education providers in Greater Manchester, including publications, raise awareness of the provision in all our institutions. We are committed to playing an active role in the partnership. We will continue to develop our programme of master classes, visits and taster sessions for young people targeted by Aimhigher. Work continues with young working class males using role models of existing students to demonstrate the capacity to succeed in higher education (delivered in conjunction with Bury Aimhigher and Bolton Aimhigher). The cost of these activities is generally divided between Aimhigher and the University. The University covers delivery costs, including staff and resources, whilst Aimhigher usually covers participant costs.

- **Bolton and Bury Learning Partnerships**

The University is an active member of the Bolton and Bury Learning Partnerships which promote joint working between the school, college, local authority and higher education partners in the two boroughs. In particular, the University (through the Deputy Vice Chancellor) chairs the Aimhigher subgroups of both partnerships. These activities are linked to an agreed strategy approved by the Aimhigher Steering Group of Greater Manchester. Key activities led by the University include:

- Vocational progression pathways into HE through Modern Apprenticeships and Vocational Qualifications
- Work-based Learning Development and HE Opportunities in Key Sectors in partnership with the North West TUC Learner Representatives Scheme
- HE Aspiration Raising Among Muslim Girls
- HE Aspiration raising through Sport and Youth activity with Bolton Lads and Girls Club and Bolton Wanderers
- Work with After Hours Homework Clubs and the University of the First Age

- HE Curriculum Links with Specialist Schools, especially in Design; Technology and Performing Arts
  - Progression into HE from COVEs
  - Progression into HE for Looked After Children and Asylum Seekers/Refugees.
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- **HEFCE/ESF Funded Summer Schools**

In recent years the University has delivered many Summer Schools to beneficiaries in years 10 and 11 including dedicated Summer Schools for Black and Ethnic Minorities. This represents a significant commitment to raising aspiration and attainment activity and represents recognition of our success in recruiting to and delivering effective summer school programmes.

Taking into account the University's excellent record in providing accessible higher education and our success in attracting applications from underrepresented groups, including mature learners, students from low income backgrounds and from lower socio-economic groups, we do not intend to increase our general level of outreach activity.

However, we have identified two areas where we wish to improve the participation of the target group at the University:

- women students on undergraduate Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) courses
- ethnic minority students from Bolton

Although the proportion of women undergraduates is rising nationally and now constitutes a majority of undergraduates, the University attracts more men than women (54% men, 46% women). In recent years the gender gap has widened as a consequence of changes in our course portfolio, e.g. the decline of humanities subjects and increased popularity of computer related courses. We have acted as sector leader in developing a mentoring scheme to support and encourage the career aspirations of women academics in SET through the Athena project, but have not paid as much attention to raise the aspiration of those at school to embark on a career in SET.

We have established links with the local ethnic minority communities, with projects such as Enlighten, and our Multicultural Studies Centre is firmly established, promoting activities and research in partnership with community groups. We believe that the University is well placed to increase significantly the participation of local ethnic minority groups in HE.

We have set aside 1% of the additional income raised from increased tuition fees to fund outreach activity in these areas.

## **7. Milestones**

We have set ourselves the objective of continuing to meet or exceeding our benchmark for the HEFCE/HESA performance indicators set out in Table 1a and b and Table 2a and b during the period of the agreement.

In addition, we have set the following objectives in relation to women entering onto SET courses and ethnic minority participation.

- To increase the recruitment of women onto undergraduate SET courses by approximately 2% points per year
- To increase the recruitment of ethnic minority undergraduate students to achieve a participation rate of 2% above the HESA expected level by the end of the agreement period

## **8. Monitoring Arrangements**

The Bursary Strategy Group, which reports to the Executive team, will monitor the operation of this agreement. The Executive Team will approve the information required by the Office of Fair Access to be submitted via the Annual Monitoring Statement to HEFCE.

**Appendix 1 – Tuition Fees 2010/11**

**We intend to set our fees at the following maximum levels for full-time students who entered higher education on or after 1st September 2006**

| Qualification   | Fee Level      |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|
|   | Full year      | Half year      |
| BA/BA Hons<br>BSc/BSc Hons<br>BEng/BEng Hons<br>BDes (Hons)<br>FdA/FdSc | £3,290         | £1,645         |
| Certificate/Diploma of Higher Education                                 | £3,290         | £1,645         |
| HND/HNC   | £3,290         | £1,645         |
| HE Foundation Year  | £3,290         | £1,645         |
| Sandwich Year Out   | No tuition fee | No tuition fee |
| PGDE/PDE (Full-Time)  | £2,193         |                |
| PGDE/PDE (Part-Time)  | £659           |                |

The fees are subject to an annual inflationary increase as published by the government each year through regulations.

**Appendix 2 – Bursary & Scholarships 2010/2011****Bursary**

|                           | <b>Household income</b> | <b>Amount</b> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| All Students <sup>1</sup> | £0 – £39,333            | £350          |
| New Students <sup>2</sup> | £39,334 - £60,032 +     | £120          |

<sup>1</sup> All Students - those full-time students entering higher education on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 who are defined as eligible for the bursary

<sup>2</sup> New Students - those full-time students entering higher education on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 who are defined as eligible for the bursary

**Scholarships**

| <b>Scholarship</b>       | <b>Amount</b>   |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Vice Chancellors Award   | Upto £15,000    |
| Bolton Scholarship       | £750 per annum  |
| Excellence Scholarship   | £500 per annum  |
| Care Leavers Scholarship | £1000 per annum |