



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

OFFA

Access Agreement

2010/11

UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH OFFA AGREEMENT 2009/10

1. Context

Our aim is to become **the** enterprise university, truly “business-engaging” and delivering outstanding economic, social and cultural benefits from our intellectual capital. Pivotal in a city acknowledged as **the enterprise capital of the south west**. As part of its regional and widening participation mission the University remains committed to ensuring equality of access to its courses from all sections of the community and will seek to ensure that its admissions, bursary and scholarship policies will remain clear, well articulated and supportive. Our intention in this document is to set out the range of support available to ensure that as wide a range of students as possible will benefit from the teaching and learning experiences the University can provide for the 2009/10 period.

2. Fee Limits

The University of Plymouth made the decision to charge students the £3,000 fee for all courses from 2006 onwards reflecting the quality and reputation of its courses and the major investments in its campus estate. Fee rates for 2010 entry are in line with the recommended levels. Fees are uplifted annually in line with inflation.

Fee rate	Year
£3,225	2009/10
£3,290	2010/11

As part of its regional mission the University provides HE in FE in partnership with FE Colleges across the SW peninsula, through an indirect funding agreement with the Colleges. Students pay fees to the college that they attend, and are therefore eligible for the student support packages where appropriate from that institution. See footnote¹ for the University’s partner colleges.

2.2. Top-up fees

¹ Bicton College, Bridgwater College, City of Bristol College, City College, Plymouth, Cornwall College [including Duchy and St. Austell Colleges], East Devon College, Exeter College, North Devon College, Somerset College of Arts and Technology, South Devon College, Stroud College, Truro College [including Penwith College], Weymouth College

Students progressing to the University of Plymouth to top up a foundation degree will be charged the full fee rate for their top up year[s] and will be eligible for the University's range of bursaries and scholarships.

2.3. Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry

The Universities of Plymouth and Exeter jointly manage admissions to the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry. Students are currently allocated randomly to the constituent universities. PCMD has its own bursaries which are administered manually, however the University of Plymouth ensures that relevant students receive their statutory bursary.

3. Bursaries and other Financial Support for Students

The University of Plymouth has a long established record for widening participation in HE both directly into the University and through its network of Partner Colleges in the South West of England. As part of that mission we set in place a range of bursary and other support measures for our students in 2006 which were designed to be flexible and supportive. At the time we stated that these would be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate and well targeted. The support package is for home and EU students on full-time courses where the full and deferred fee rate is applied only, with the exception of those students on NHS or TDA funded courses, or students on a placement year.

3.1 Bursary Support 2010 entry

Scheme	Amount	Household income criteria	Additional information	Allocated Budget
Plymouth Bursary - Level one	£900	<£25,000	Includes the minimum statutory bursary and available to students starting a year zero course in Science/Technology	In accordance with student volume
Plymouth Bursary -Level two	£300	>£25,001 to £40,000	Allows more students to receive support	In accordance with student volume
Relocation Bursary	£1,575	n/a	For independently assessed students relocating to take up a Plymouth course .	£53,500
Independent Student hardship fund	£550	In receipt of Income Support or Disability		£53,500

		benefits at least six months prior to the start of the course		
Care Leavers bursary	£2,000	n/a		In accordance with student volume
Increased Hardship Funds			In additional to the ALF to support students in hardship. In addition funds are allocated to Partner Colleges to support those HE students in difficulty	£500,000

3.2 Scholarships Support 2010 entry

The university's range of scholarships has been rationalised as follows:

Scheme	Amount	Criteria
Fieldwork Scholarship	Up to £350	A contribution towards compulsory fieldtrips as per a specified course list reviewed annually for those students from low income households or in financial hardship
Studio and Lab Scholarships	Zero-balancing	No additional studio or lab costs as per a specified course list
Sports Scholarships	Up to £1,500	For participation in sports to a national and/or international level

4 Provision of Information to Students

The university has undertaken extensive communications activity to promote awareness of its bursary scheme, using a combination of online and offline methods to audiences such as potential students, applicants, parents, teachers and advisors. Activities include:

- Fees and funding leaflets for enquirers and applicants
- Improved web pages with one url www.plymouth.ac.uk/money
- Open day and course preview day presentations.
- Finance DVD for all applicants updated annually

- Ensuring the university finance pages link through to the student support website
- Student funding unit providing a one stop shop for enquiries.
- E-newsletters to enquirers advising and linking to one url
- Reminders to students to encourage consent to share.

5 Outreach Work

The University of Plymouth has a national and international reputation for its successful WP outreach, transition and on-course support activities to widen participation in HE. The existing University of Plymouth institutional WP activities include:

- Aimhigher visits
- Taster experiences, campus visits and residentials
- Mentoring schemes
- Family events and activities with parents and key influencers;
- Interventions to support prospective target “mature” students (over 21 years) through the University’s Routes to HE Enquiry Service. This also includes visits to Access to HE student groups throughout the South West region
- Faculty initiatives: STOP (Science Technology Opportunities Project) programme; Access to Medicine Initiative; Creative Arts WP programme; Faculty of Health and Social Work programme; Faculty of Social Science and Business WP programmes
- Pre-entry and on-course initiatives with disabled students and students with dyslexia
- Community outreach projects with BME prospective students and positive action initiatives to support subject specific areas of gender imbalance (e.g. Community Outreach through staff and student volunteering; Community Action Research projects; links with Racial Equality “Respect” festival; specific actions with Chinese community; women/girls into Science and Technology projects).

In addition to this extensive portfolio of current WP outreach activities (supported by WP Core Premium funding) the University of Plymouth plays a key role in the delivery of the collaborative Aimhigher Peninsula Programme (covering Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset). Of particular note is the University’s role in:

- The management, administration and development of the programme since its inception. For 2008-11 the University will be the Lead HEI for the APP (Aimhigher Peninsula Programme) with all requisite responsibilities that the role entails
- The lead role of the University for certain strands within the programme namely
 - ❖ Strand 1 work with target schools – Raising aspirations from Year 7 to and including Year 11 in the proposed progression

framework of intervention activities with target cohorts of school students.

- ❖ The management and delivery of the Aimhigher Healthcare Strand through the University's Faculty of Health and Social Work
- ❖ Delivery of the "Engaging Ability" Strand relating to work with disabled learners (through the University's Disability Assist Unit).

In addition to the above, the University contributes to all strands of work within the current and proposed Aimhigher Peninsula Programme for 2008-11.

The University of Plymouth intends to add to this portfolio of WP outreach activity, through its OFFA agreement by providing an additional £250k for further WP outreach activity as follows:

6 Additional Institutional WP Outreach supported through fee income 2007-2010

This summary outlines the areas of work additional to our core central and faculty WP portfolio and will be reported on separately as part of our OFFA agreement.

6.1 Additional Compact Activity

Additional money will be used to support an increase in the number of WP target schools who can participate in the Compact scheme to 20 schools and extend the range of outreach activities from post-16 school students to 14-19 year school students.

6.2 Additional Faculty WP Activities

Faculties produce annual WP action plans for devolved core WP funded activities. Faculties will have additional funding to work on identified new and enhanced WP initiatives.

6.3 The expansion of Plymouth Undergraduate Student Shadowing Scheme (PLUSS)

The Plymouth Undergraduate Student Shadowing Scheme had, in its initial stages of development been supported through external funding. The scheme will now be continued, supported and developed institutionally. The scheme will become mainstreamed into the University's institutional WP outreach portfolio and extend the number of opportunities for WP profile year students to participate and extend the reach of the scheme across the SW Peninsula.

6.4 HE Information, Advice, and Guidance

Further outreach WP activities which raise awareness and aspirations for targeted individuals and groups, will be further strengthened in their aim to realise and support actual progression to Level 3 and 4 study through the continuing role of the Information, Advice, Guidance and Support officer supported through OFFA money, and in addition will offer IAG to 14-19 diploma students in the region.

6.5 University Community Engagement

'Influencing the Influencers' – parents, carers, youth leaders, community organisations and activists etc is absolutely key to the WP agenda, hence funding support for a cross University community open day – designed to break down barriers for key influencers particularly aiming to reach those individuals and groups who have not before stepped over the University's front door. Similar events are planned and follow-up WP community outreach will promote the longer term relationships necessary to ensure this dimension is not a 'one-off' intervention.

6.6 Study Skills Support

The development of a new scheme for target post 16 students in Plymouth. Trained university students will provide study skills seminars and workshops on campus. This is a collaborative initiative with Plymouth Local Authority.

6.7 Outreach to support uptake of Care Leaver's Bursary

Information, advice and guidance to promote the availability of the bursary to target individuals and authorities.

6.8 Community Classroom

A new outdoor initiative to support learning with WP target students in the region.

6.9 RELAYS

Supporting the Hoops for Health project, and the RELAYS South West 2012 Olympics activity. This is a collaborative project with Plymouth Raiders Basketball team and University of Plymouth students in feeder primary and target secondary WP, working with parents and pupils to maintain motivation and interest in learning post 16.

6.10 Newquay Boardmasters Event

An annual summer roadshow at Newquay offering information, advice and guidance to potential students, returners to study, progression students at local study centres and influencers. Visitors to the event are largely from the region.

7 Milestones and Monitoring

The University has to date an established record of meeting and exceeding most HEFCE bench marks in terms of Access and Widening Participation. The University will continue to further develop current arrangements for monitoring progression in improving access and impact measures within this agreement. The following points are significant:

- Setting annual targets for Widening Participation activities through annual action plans and monitoring reports at Faculty and institutional level. This will include reporting on additional outreach activities identified within this agreement. This will be reported separately for 2009-10 and beyond
- Established committee and reporting mechanisms will be used internally to monitor progress. They include the University's WP Strategic Planning Group, Equal Opportunities Committee, Senior Management Team and Governing Body. Widening Participation is the specific line management responsibility of the designated Deputy Vice Chancellor with line management responsibility for WP.
- The University will also build on its knowledge of qualitative evaluation data relating to impact of WP interventions, and experiences of WP groups pre, on course and on exit. The new entrant's survey and deadlines will be used to monitor access and information issues.
- The University will continue to monitor its performance relating to WP Performance Indicators
- In the event of disappointing performance against location adjusted benchmarks, the University has established a Strategic group (the OFFA group) to review and make appropriate adjustments to our bursary and scholarship policies

The University will provide a summary annual report on additional WP Outreach as part of our annual monitoring return to OFFA.