

Introduction

The University of Bradford is at the leading edge of widening participation to higher education with one of the most socially inclusive student populations in the United Kingdom, which is combined with good student retention rates and consistent major success in achieving graduate employment rates for our students. In essence a university committed to its community and student success.

The University's Corporate Strategy for 2004-2009 commits it to continuing with this success and to ensuring further enhancement to the quality of the student experience. We are seeking to invest in the longer term over £130 million through the delivery of our estates strategy, which will improve learning, residential and facilities infrastructures including the provision of a state of the art web based campus and a fully integrated student support centre – The Hub.

Over the lifetime of its most recent Widening Participation Strategy and the Corporate Plan for the period 2000 – 2005, the University has made spectacular progress. It has always performed well in terms of recruiting locally, from diverse communities and from low-income groups. Since the publication of the first set of Performance Indicators in 1999 the University has performed above the national benchmarks, particularly relating to students from lower socio economic groups. The effect of this success has resulted in a fundamental change in the student population, and as a result the University is continuing the process of policy review to ensure the continuation of the best possible learning experience for all students irrespective of their cultural, social, health or financial background

Although a number of definitions have changed in terms of the data collection, table one on the following page demonstrates how the University performance compares with other pre 92 universities, the sector average and other HEIs in Yorkshire and the Humber. This simply confirms the University's position in terms of securing greater social inclusion with 43.7% of our home and EU first year students coming from low socio economic groups in 2006/07. Table two reflects this performance against benchmark which even taking into account the location adjusted figure portrays successful delivery of the strategy

Table 1.

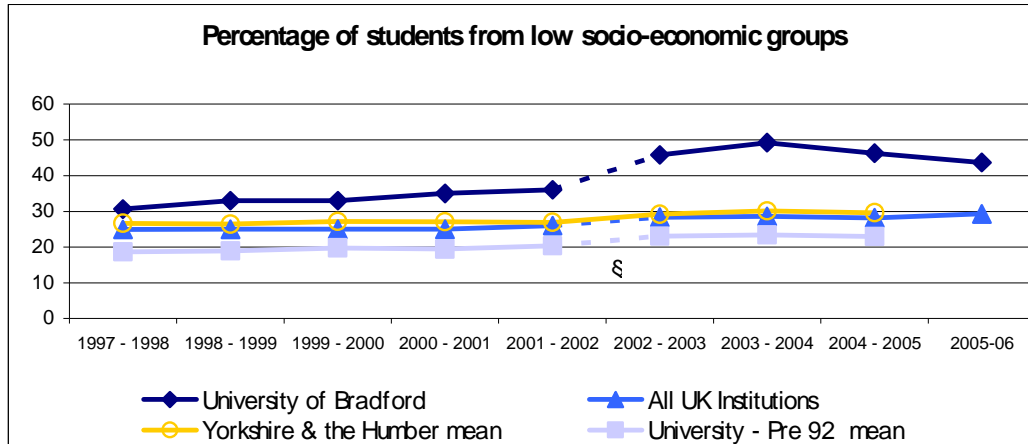
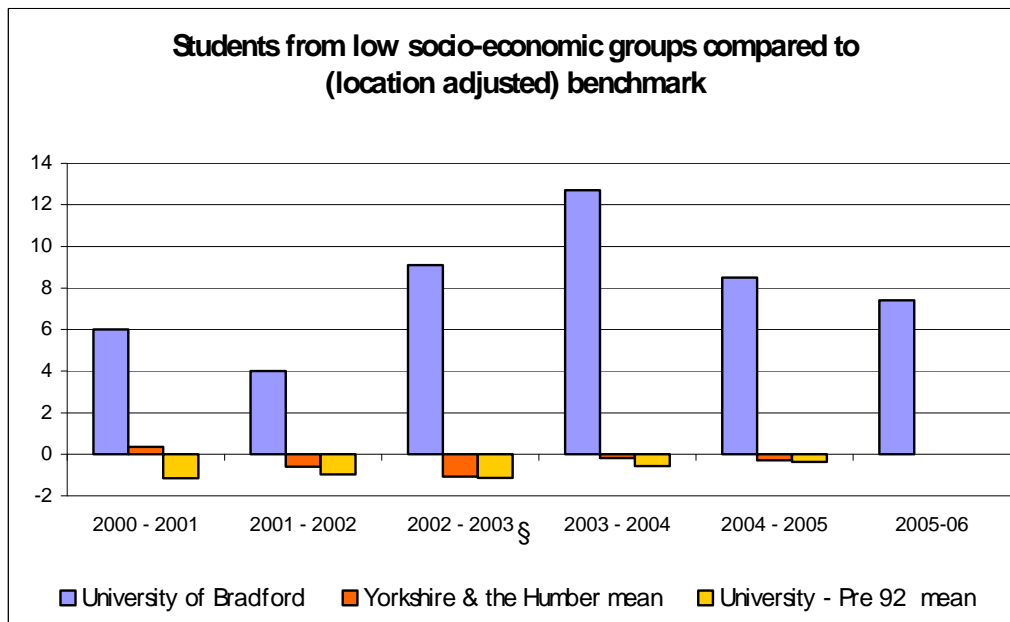


Table 2.

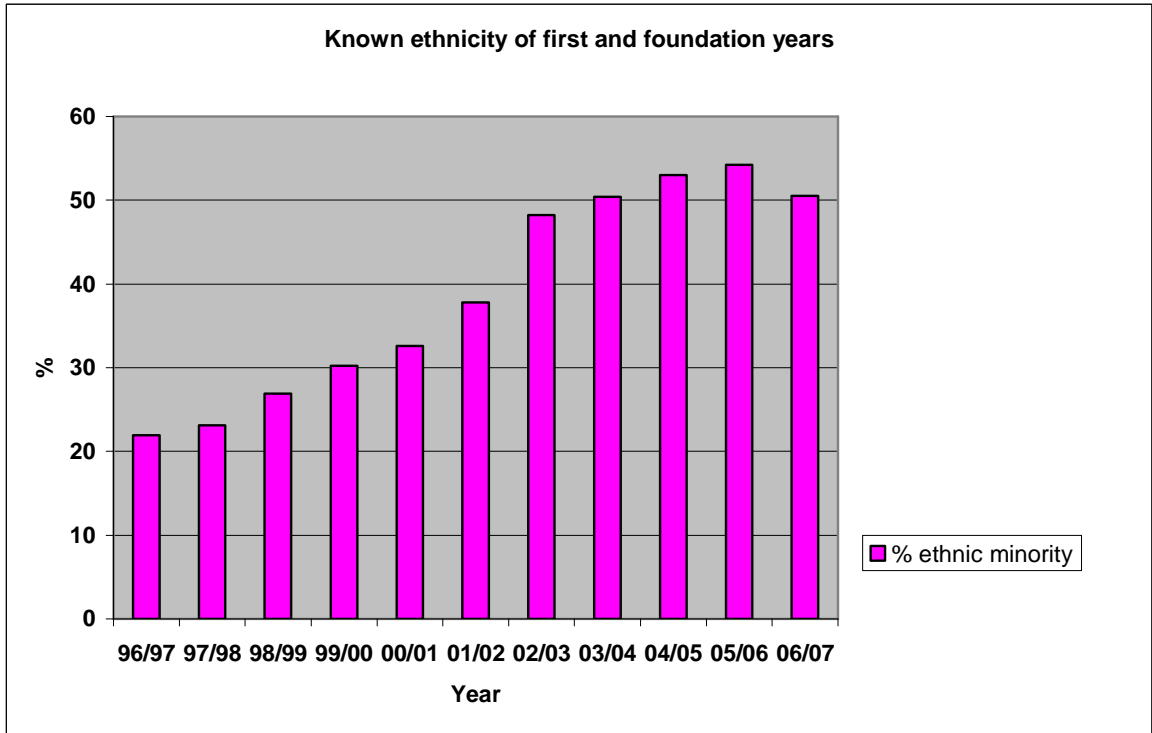


§ Social Class

For the 2001 census, a new classification, National Statistics - Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC), was developed to replace Social Class. It took into account new work patterns in the UK, and the changes in education levels required for, and the status of, large numbers of occupations. This new classification was used for the social class PI this year, and as a result this will now be called the SEC indicator. In previous years, the six categories of Social Class were combined by taking classes I, II and IIIa as 'high' social class, and classes IIIb, IV and V as 'low' social class. The new classification has seven analytic classes, and groups 1 to 3 are used as 'high' class and 4 to 7 as 'low'. This has increased the overall percentage from low social class by over 2.5%.

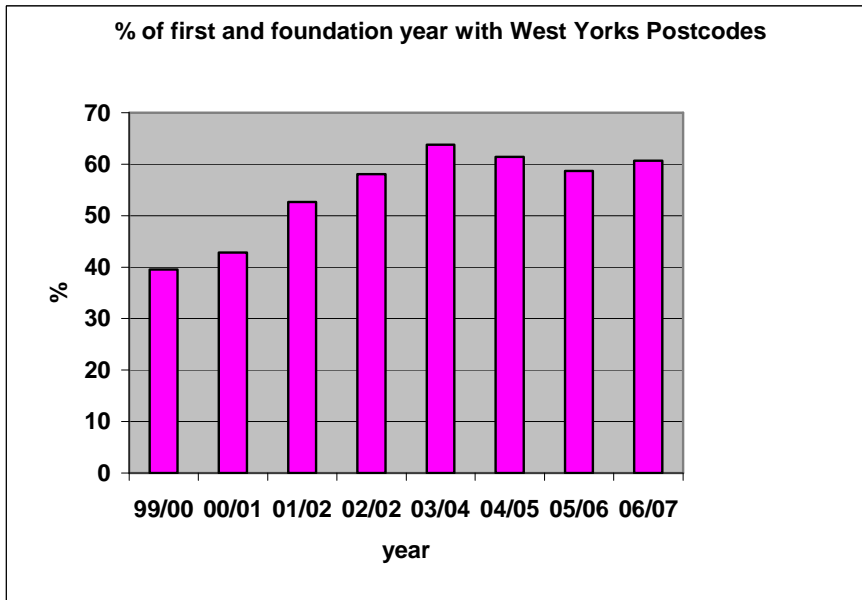
This participation level demonstrates the success of the University's approach to inclusivity. It has worked hard with local communities, schools and colleges to seek to provide a more balanced student population in keeping with the needs of the sub region. We have therefore seen significant change in the ethnic profile of the student body in terms of home students as table three demonstrates. There have also been significant increases in International students with students from over 100 countries to create a multi-cultural learning environment.

Table 3. University of Bradford ethnicity of home first and foundation year students



In line with the rest of the sector, there has been an increasing trend for students to stay at their parental home whilst studying. In 2003/04 over 40% of full time first and foundation year students lived in their parental home, and 63.8% had West Yorkshire postcodes. Table four demonstrates those trends

Table 4. University of Bradford Home first and foundation year students with West Yorkshire Postcodes



The University continues to an increase in the numbers of disabled students. The University has a Disability Office, which is part of our overall Student Services facilities. Disability Office staff deal initially with all requests for information, guidance

and support for students identified as disabled. This involves assessing individual educational, technical and personal needs and identifying appropriate sources of support, including external funding.

The University's outreach strategy and links with schools and colleges is managed under the umbrella title of the Bradford University Academy (see page 7) which has several strands

- Raising aspirations through activities with schools and colleges to demonstrate the value that HE can bring
- Raising Attainment levels
- Facilitating progression through a compact scheme through which students submit assessed course work

The University has long held the view that successfully widening participation requires more than activities to simply change the nature of participation, as the key is to ensure that students succeed in their programmes of study and then move into graduate employment. The University's retention rate is improving and continues to perform above the national benchmarks.

The University continues to achieve success for graduates in the working world. We are particularly proud of our graduate employment rates in Bradford with 95% of 2005 graduates taking up graduate or graduate track employment.¹ This positioned the institution at the top within Yorkshire in the 2007 Times Good University Guide, and joint number one University in the North of England for this indicator.

Widening Participation and our Corporate Strategy.

One of our main core values '**confronting inequality, celebrating diversity**' has and continues to set the context for much of our work. The Corporate Strategy for the period 2004-2009 continues this by commitment to the following Corporate Objectives:

- **Widening participation, achievement and social inclusion**
- **Enhancing the Distinct Learner Experience**
- **Working and learning in a diverse community**
- **A University at the heart of its community**

Our commitment to achieving inclusion does not just limit itself to the admissions process, we are fully committed to ensuring that students are supported in a manner that is appropriate for their own circumstance, to ensure that retention rates are good, and students from all backgrounds have the same chance of success. To this end, the University is now in the process of reviewing and redefining its Academic Policy, which will support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy for the same period, up to 2009. The vision is for an expanding and vibrant University, with a curriculum that addresses the needs of existing and new stakeholders through the embedding of the new 'three cycle model'². As previously stated, the University is already able to demonstrate a successful track record with regard to raising participation levels, but realises that there is still progress to be made to continue to demonstrate its commitment to inclusiveness, social inclusion and raising the performance of the local region and its economy. We will continue to pursue this by:

¹ Number of graduates taking up employment or further study divided by the number with a known destination, including employment which normally recruits graduates and adjusted for the institutional subject mix

² Which will facilitate expansion of the curriculum
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- Ensuring that the University's success in widening participation, completion rates and employability of students remains amongst the best in the UK HE sector.
- Providing student support and guidance services of the highest quality
- Establishing Lifelong Learning Networks

We are therefore keen to safeguard our current success at attracting, retaining and equipping students from the most under represented groups. The following sections of this document set out our approach and plans for the next five years.

Level of fees

In accordance with the terms of the Higher Education Act 2004 the University of Bradford plans to use the facility for charging variable tuition fees at a level above the current regulated amount from the academic year 2006/7. The University's position on the level of fees for 2008/09 is attached as **Annex 1** to this agreement. The University reserves the option as part of our fees policy to adopt a market sensitive approach, to the fee level set. This approach will be incorporated into our review and monitoring mechanisms of both our Corporate and Financial Strategies, outlined on page 11 of this document. Full information on any material changes will be communicated to Offa, as appropriate.

The Learning Support Fund

The University will establish a **Learning Support Fund**, which will be created using an element of the additional fee income. The Learning Support Fund which will include our commitment to the minimum standard bursary is estimated to be approximately 30% of projected additional fee income (see page 9). This will recognise that sometimes students have financial difficulties in learning and will provide additional flexibility to support student need. In addition to the provision of individual custom support packages the Learning Support fund will be used to support the Access Strand of the bursary scheme, which will support our Bradford University Academy Students. We have not set a maximum limit on the amount of support that can be received in terms of the level of bursary, as we would wish to assess individuals on the basis of need, and would not wish to be constrained. It will also provide needs based support to other under represented students, such as those with disabilities. This fund will also support actions to expand the number and range of externally funded scholarships, through the development of a pro-active strategy and will support the development of enhanced financial information provision to students to ensure that they are fully aware of the costs of studying at Bradford and the support available to them.

Bursaries

The 2003/04-entry profile showed that the breakdown of full-time home students in relation to the receipt of fees support was:

Household income **£0 - £20,970** receiving full support **(50%)**

Household income **£20,970 - £31,230**, receiving partial support **(11%)**

Household income above **£31,230** or no application for fees support **(39%)**

As can be seen from the above, this is considerably above the national average of 30%, for those who receive full fee support, a reflection of our existing successful position relating to widening participation. The profiles for 2004/05 and 2005/06 entrants have continued this trend with 51% of students receiving full support and 19% receiving partial support in 2004/05; and 56% of students receiving full support and 17% receiving partial support in 2005/06. We have used this information as a proxy to aid our planning, in the absence of any other more appropriate data, for information only at this stage and not a direct statement on student financial means. Nevertheless, we are fully committed to the provision of **minimum standard bursaries** of £300 per academic year, from 2006/07, to all those who are eligible for the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant (rising to £305 in 2007/08 and £310 in 2008/09). In addition, students receiving a partial grant will also be considered for the minimum standard bursary. **Annex 2** shows the University of Bradford Bursary Scheme for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and the proposed scheme for 2008/09.

Based on our current student participation the University expects to spend a greater proportion of additional fee income on bursaries than most other universities with over 50% of students likely to qualify for the maximum grant. The University bursary package will comprise two strands:

1. Income-Related Strand

All students in receipt of the maximum Higher Education Maintenance Grant on entry to the full time degree course charging the maximum fee (£3145 in 2008/09) will be entitled to the minimum standard bursary (£310 in 2008/09). Students in receipt of a partial Maintenance Grant will also be considered for the minimum bursary.

2. Access Strand

All students that participated in the Bradford University Academy and then go on to enrol on a full-time degree course charging the maximum fee (£3145 in 2008/09), regardless of income. This will take the form of a Compact Award paid in the first year of the course.

The University is, as stated earlier, committed to promoting student success, and this applies to progression, retention and further study. In order to achieve this, we have reached agreements with those institutions where our students progress as part of their academic route, e.g. Clinical Sciences route to Leeds University, in order to ensure that their bursaries will be honoured for the lifetime of the course. Similar discussions and arrangements will apply to institutions and courses where we are the progression route – e.g. from HND to BA.

We have also developed a bursary at postgraduate level, for those who have received tuition fee support from their Local Authority during their first degree. This will apply to Home and EU students from any institution who come to the University to study on a taught postgraduate programme. This scheme will start from September 2007 in a pilot form for the first year where eligible students will receive a £500 Postgraduate Bursary.

We will continue to investigate the developing arrangements for the administration of student support, including that proposed by Universities UK as part of the model bursary scheme, but we realise that this is still in development, and will be keeping progress under review.

Care Leavers Support Package

The University has made a firm commitment to supporting students who are Care Leavers in Higher Education. Eligible students can receive a Care Leavers Grant of £1,000 a year as well as help with applications for Higher Education, access to year-round accommodation and support with childcare. As a result of this work with Care Leavers the University has been awarded a Quality Mark from the children's charity The Frank Buttle Trust.

Outreach activities

The University has a very successful and extensive outreach programme, and this scale of activity is embedded in our Corporate Strategy, as discussed earlier in this document. Our key corporate objectives are:

- **Widening participation, achievement and social inclusion**
- **Working and learning in a diverse community**
- **A University at the heart of its community**

We have clearly stated that this work will be further embedded into the work of the institution in our Corporate Strategy, and given our success to date, do not initially plan to fund additional outreach activity from additional fee income.

The University is proud of the success of its outreach programme, which has put the University of Bradford at the forefront nationally for recruiting students from low-income families and has outperformed the sector on average by 12%. Of the eight Universities in Yorkshire, Bradford is ranked first in recruiting first-degree entrants who were from families who do not traditionally access higher education.

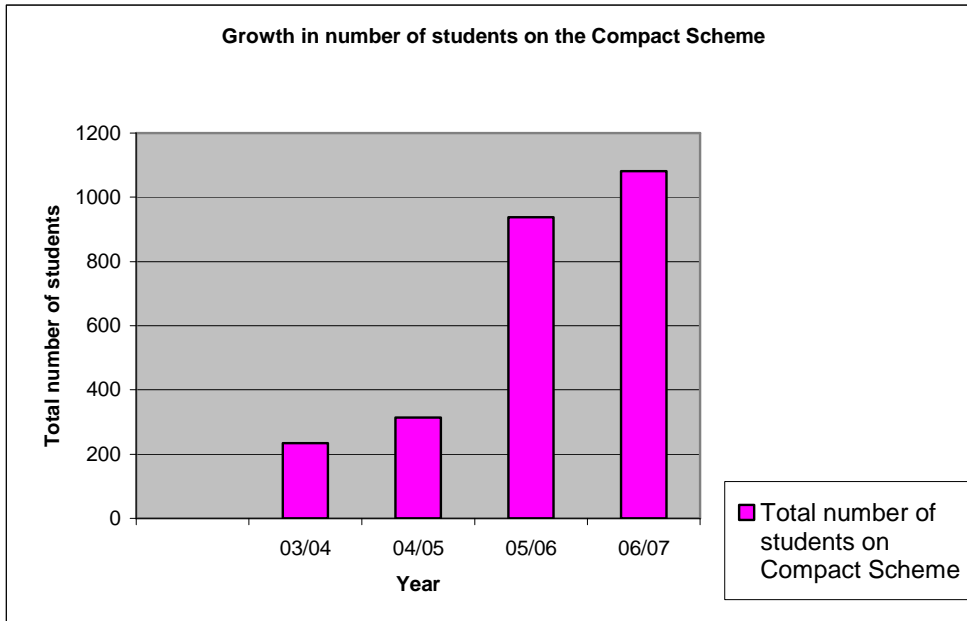
The University has an extensive outreach programme and divides this work into three specific areas:

1. Bradford University Academy

This cross-institutional initiative is a programme of activities aimed at raising the aspirations and achievement of young people and encouraging progression into higher education.

The Academy is a co-ordinated scheme, which works with young people from primary age upwards, specifically in disadvantaged areas of the sub-region, particularly BME communities, offering activities such as ACE days, fun days, master classes, Junior University, campus trails, revision classes, summer schools, and the Bradford University Compact Scheme. Compact Scheme members can achieve up to 30 points towards their Bradford UCAS tariff if they successfully complete assessed activity. This has been a major development for the University of Bradford and numbers of students registered on the Compact Scheme has grown rapidly – see table 5 below:

Table 5



2. University in the Community

University in the Community is a programme, which targets adults in the community, and offers a wide range of aspiration raising activity, including taster courses, Community Days, and accredited modules based off campus. The programme targets adults who have no previous experience in HE and specifically aims to work with 'hard-to-reach' groups such as those recovering from substance misuse, and those from white working class estates.

Other areas of this work focus on those who influence young people such as the parents and carers and for example there are currently 50 women of Asian origin from one geographical area of Bradford who are engaged in a pilot off campus accredited programme.

The University has been active since mid 2003 in delivering the Horton Grange Community Development Project. The main purpose of the Project is to identify, promote and support the development of the community organisations within the geographical area of the Horton Grange Local Development and Employment Pact (LDEP). The Project supports the development of community organisations and/or social enterprises. This support also involves the creation of new groups where a need is identified, and supports them in accessing campus resources where appropriate.

3. FE to HE

Another specific area of outreach is targeting both mature students and young people to engage in FE provision, and in particular working to aid progression from vocationally related courses.

The University has made a major commitment in its Corporate Strategy to the further development of lifelong learning networks and partnerships. Over the next two years this development will be pursued with local colleges, and the Open College Network

for North and West Yorkshire, as a means of developing progression routes, and more localised HE provision.

Contributing to these three strands are a number of externally funded initiatives, which include:

Aimhigher

The University is an active participant in the West Yorkshire Aimhigher initiative, working closely with schools and colleges to promote greater progression to higher education. The main activities are linked to the Bradford University Academy, along with a major commitment to student mentoring and links with work based learning providers.

HEIF 2

The University was one of the most successful universities in securing Higher Education Innovation fund support from HEFCE with a grant of £2.4million. A major strand of this initiative has supported the establishment of the Centre for Community Collaboration with a group of Community Associates linking the University of Bradford with its community, in line with our corporate objectives.

The HEIF2 scheme includes a significant commitment to supporting the Regional Skills agenda through a transformation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, thus widening opportunities for those already in employment seeking to develop appropriate skills.

Provision of financial support information

The University already provides a comprehensive financial information service to potential students. "The Hub" is our integrated student support centre and is the principal point of contact for students outside their academic department. It provides a wide range of advice and support, including financial guidance, and the administration of financial relief, bursaries and awards. Our Student Support Team is increasingly used as an example of best practice in its field, and was one of only four institutions nationally involved in the DfES working party for the review of student support. This has led to further regular and close liaison with DfES, and a proactive approach to the development of new approaches to the way in which we support our students. The Student Support Team also plays a crucial role in student recruitment and retention with talks to parents and prospective students regarding finances, bursaries and welfare provision and support.

We recognise however, that the changing nature of financial support within HE and the public debate that has taken place regarding variable fees means that we have to enhance our current provision and provide different levels of information and to very different age groups and this will be funded from additional fee income. The development of the **Learning Support Fund** discussed earlier, will facilitate the change in direction, as it will enable more flexible and targeted responses to need, engagement at an earlier level with potential students and their families. We will also seek to expand the number and range of externally funded scholarships, through the development of a pro-active strategy, linked to our existing expertise. We will be producing a range of financial information, appropriate to the individual needs of differing target groups. Thus, we are able through the above existing facilities, and

planned developments to commit to providing information on the aggregate cost of tuition, and levels of support to students prior to the stage at which they gain a place.

The total amount to be spent on access measures

The full extent of expenditure, which the University of Bradford currently spends on access and outreach measures, is difficult to measure. As a minimum we have identified around **£1.2million** per year, but this does not take into account the full contribution of University of Bradford schools or of project funding. Given the scale of this contribution, and our current enrolment patterns, and as stated earlier, we do not plan to increase spend in this area. However, funds that are additional to the above to cover The Learning Support Fund (including bursaries) are estimated at **£955K** in 2006/07, rising to over **£3million** in 2009/10.

This funding is related to recruitment targets and therefore will vary pro rata to these targets, but represents approximately 30% of projected additional fee income.

A breakdown of spending areas is detailed below:

Detail	Target Group	Comments
Minimum Standard Bursary (Income-Related strand)	All those eligible for full HE Maintenance grant. Eligible students on partial grants will also be considered.	
Access Strand of the Bursary – the Compact Award	All students that are part of the Bradford University Academy regardless of income on entry to the University	One-off payment in first year of course.
Learning Support Fund Financial Support information	Bradford University Academy Disabled students Other under represented groups, supporting achievement.	Will support flexible responses to widening access.
Administrative costs of the above activity	All recipients	An initial estimate of the cost has been set at 10% of the additional fee income related to the learning support fund.

The University is fully committed to the following Milestones and objectives:

- Maintaining the current broad ethnic balance of our population of home undergraduates, whilst at the same time focussing on smaller minority groups who may not be represented as fully as we would hope.
- Enhancing and increasing participation of older learners
- Maintaining our position above benchmark relating to NS-SEC participation of all full time young undergraduate entrants.
- Continuing our remit as an institution at the forefront of the national and regional policy agenda on widening participation

Monitoring compliance to the agreement

The University has well established mechanisms by which it monitors its achievements in widening participation, and will continue to use these reporting mechanisms to ensure that the aims set out in this document are fulfilled. The groups currently involved are:

- Implementation and Performance Group,
- Corporate and Financial Strategy Board
- Academic Policy Committee (of Senate)
- League Tables Working Group (in relation to HEFCE performance indicators).
- Fees, Bursaries and Scholarships Sub-Committee – newly created to monitor and implement development and strategies in this area.

The University's Corporate Strategy for 2004-09 will use a balanced scorecard approach to performance manages its achievements against key targets. This approach will enable the institution to develop and define data sets, which in turn will support the monitoring of our compliance to this access agreement, in addition to reviewing the market sensitivity issues surrounding undergraduate fee levels.

How access measures will complement existing activity

The additional measures to be delivered, as part of this document are the student financial support from the Learning Support Fund including the minimum statutory bursaries. As we currently are attracting and delivering courses to a far higher percentage of students who are eligible for the maximum fee support than the national average, the provision of the bursary will ensure that access is safeguarded for those from low-income families. The presence of the Learning Support Fund, will allow specific issues relating to specific student needs to be addressed, and in this respect will also safeguard access and support retention amongst groups at risk.

Type of Course	Fees per year	Sandwich Placement
3-year Undergraduate Degree (not foundation year)	£3,145	-
4-year Undergraduate Degree (thick sandwich) [see note 1]	£3,145	£625 (full year)
4-year Undergraduate Degree (thin sandwich) [See note 2]	£3,145	£625 (2nd sandwich placement period)
Foundation year (except Clinical Sciences)	£1,200	-
Foundation year in Clinical Sciences	£3,145	-
Foundation Degree	£3,145	-

[note 1] one long placement

[note 2] two short placements

The University of Bradford Bursary was paid to Home and EU students on full-time undergraduate courses who were under the new variable fee system.

Eligible students had a household income of under £37,425 a year in 2006/07 and £38,330 in 2007/08 i.e. all English students would be receiving some level of Maintenance Grant. However, as long as students had some form of income assessment they did not need to be in receipt of the grant e.g. students on second degrees.

The bursary amounts were:

Year of Course	Bursary Amount
Foundation	£500
1	£500
2	£700
3 +	£900

Proposed scheme for 2008/09.

Due to changes in levels of Government support in 2008/09 the University of Bradford proposes to extend its bursary to a two tier scheme for 2008/09. Again this is for full-time Home and EU undergraduate students, but will only apply to those starting their courses in 2008/09.

	Bursary for family income up to £40,000	Bursary for family income between £40,001 and £60,005
Foundation Year	£500	£400
First Year	£500	£400
Second Year	£700	£500
Third and subsequent Years	£900	£600