

University of Derby : Access Agreement : Updated September 2010

Introduction

This agreement is a substantial revision to that submitted under the original mandate of the Office of Fair Access in 2005. However it is a transitional document, which will be superseded by the emerging new arrangements being proposed for 2012 onwards, which will begin to impact on institutional spend during 2011. It takes into account the University's latest arrangements for threshold income levels for financial support, and gives details of the new University arrangements for degree and sub degree fee levels and bursaries. In general terms the University maintains its commitment to delivering fair and facilitative access and progression arrangements as part of its overall commitment to widening participation. Much of this work is detailed in the Widening Participation Strategic assessment, and so is not repeated here. What the WPSA will attempt to do is to synergise the activities which are supported through premium or additional funding. However, the University does not differentiate internally between these funds, and it would be both expensive and uninformative for us to attempt to do so. Where the introduction of fees clearly made a deliberate impact was in the ability of the University to increase the number and range of financial support packages it was able to offer its students, and potential students.

This fee and bursary support work is therefore the major part of the information that we supply in this agreement.

Further consideration will need to be given during the academic year 2010/11 to the future of Aimhigher Derbyshire.

We have already made some progress in determining what our options might be given the different potential outcomes of the CSR and its impact on potential future support from HEFCE. We are already looking at how we might selectively continue support for the initiative, which has developed a highly successful model for intervention over the last ten years, but a model which has relied on a central infrastructure which has in turn been resource intensive. This has been unproblematic whilst funding has been maintained: some difficult decisions will need to be made if funding is seriously cut or withdrawn completely. The University has committed in its reply to HEFCE's consultation (July 2010) to looking at the ways in which it might fulfil some of the more important functions built up by Aimhigher.

1. Widening Participation

1.1. Widening Participation has been a leading mission for the University of Derby for 15 years. The University of Derby offers higher education to the broadest spectrum of its local and sub-regional populations, as well as to the wider national and international community. This is reflected in the University's student profile, in its 2004 Mission Statement: "The University of Derby aims to be the leading provider of high quality, accessible and flexible further and higher education for regional, national and international communities," and in the significant premium it has earned from HEFCE for Widening Participation. In 2003/04, 54% of its full-time intake were eligible for full fee remission, and 16% for part fee remission, leaving 30% paying full fees. UoD's amalgamation in 1998 with High Peak College Buxton created one of a small number of Universities which can genuinely claim to offer a seamless post- compulsory education from level 1 to level 8 in the National Qualifications Framework.

1.2. The University believes that WP is not merely an initiative aimed at targeting specific and changing groups of individuals, but rather an ongoing approach to the development and delivery of educational provision which can benefit all students from whatever background. Whereas there is much operational focus on supporting non-traditional learners, learners with disability, and other specified target groups, many of the initiatives we will take will benefit all students. Thus the

University's intent is not merely to widen participation, but is also to increase participation. For this reason the University's Widening Participation Strategy was recently absorbed into mainstream activity.

1.3. The Access Agreement is built on the notion of the student lifecycle, and so seeks to:

- **Raise aspiration and attainment through outreach work**
- **Ensure maximum opportunities for progression**
- **Offer fair and facilitative access systems**
- **Retain students well and equip them for employability**

2. Outreach

2.1. The University of Derby has well established mechanisms for outreach work through its leadership of Derbyshire Aimhigher, and its partnership with schools and colleges for young people, and community initiatives and employers for adults.

2.2. From additional fee income, it has extended, and will continue to extend, its existing Compact arrangements with schools and colleges in disadvantaged communities and those having lower than average participation rates. We will enhance opportunities for their students to visit the campus and participate in taster sessions. UoD will increase the use of students as role models and mentors for school pupils.

2.3. For adults UoD has used additional funding for regeneration projects in areas characterised by low participation. It has extended the work of its Business Development Managers to maximise the development of new vocational progression routes, and flexible provision to meet specified demand of learners without higher education qualifications in the workplace. This work will continue during the period of this Access Agreement and beyond.

2.4. These new activities, with associated targets and milestones, to be invested in from additional fee income, are charted in 10 below.

3. Progression opportunities

3.1. Through the Aimhigher project and other local learning partnerships including the recently funded LEAP AHEAD Lifelong Learning Network hosted at the University, UoD is supporting curriculum mapping to identify workforce development priorities which will lead to an enhanced range of progression pathways available across the level 3/level 4 divide. Within UoD seamless progression is made possible at this interface from our FE to our HE programmes. The expansion of HE provision at the Buxton Campus of the University, where our own FE provision is based, will help to promote progression within the institution from level 3 programmes to higher education. Indeed the University through its UDB FE campus, is leading the development of 4 of the County's 14-19 Diploma Gateway bids.

3.2 The Partnership Office within the School of Flexible and Partnership learning has appointed staff with additional outreach funding to extend the range of progression partnerships that are supported, and is seeking to introduce progression accords based on direct links between Specialist Schools and Academies and particular subject groups within the University.

3.3 The University's new curriculum development strategy document "Curriculum Fit for the future" heralds the development of more flexible curriculum delivery, which in turn will encourage wider access and progression.

3.4. What was the Combined Studies Programme (the biggest undergraduate programme in the University) has been rebadged and relaunched as the Joint Honours Scheme, and will continue to be promoted as a cross-institutional programme offering a flexible curriculum and less restrictive progression routes for those with less traditional entry qualifications.

3.5. The University will continue to develop its capacity to offer many programmes and modules in e-learning forms to meet the requirements of individuals, employees and employer partners for flexible modes of study.

3.6. Specific targets and milestones for this work are contained within Faculty Business plans, and the Business plan of the School of Flexible and Partnership Learning, which holds the remit for monitoring the Access Agreement targets and through the Fees and Bursaries Group reporting progress to the University's Executive annually.

4. Fair and facilitative Access systems

4.1. The policy of the University is to admit those who, by virtue of their interests, abilities, knowledge, experience and motivation, will be best assisted to realise their full academic, creative or professional potential by benefiting from the University's educational provision.

4.2. The principle which underpins the admissions process is that of providing opportunities for all students to gain the highest level of award of which they are capable. Therefore admission of each student is based on a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to achieve to the standard required the aims and outcomes of the programme for the award for which they wish to register.

4.3. That the applicant can fulfil this expectation the University believes can be demonstrated through a wide variety of forms of preparation, including relevant experiential learning, vocational or professional awards, Access and Foundation level achievement as well as through an increasing variety of conventional certificated qualifications.

4.4. The admissions process aims to be consistent with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy, and its commitment to encouraging enrolment of students from a wide variety of backgrounds, including those from groups currently under-represented in higher education. It is designed to be fair and equitable and apply equally to all individuals regardless of ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, socio-economic background, sexual orientation or disability.

4.5. The University will maintain its commitment to providing clear information to the widest range of potential applicants; to this end all programmes will continue to:

- state their entry criteria in terms of the knowledge, skills competence and qualities required as well as in terms of qualifications;
- demonstrate how credit transfer and the accreditation of prior formal and experiential learning will operate;
- make explicit details of any selection processes and procedures and the criteria and means by which applicants will be judged;
- clarify which applicants will be interviewed, how interviews will be conducted and by whom, and the criteria used to make judgements;
- specify in broad terms how applicants may demonstrate achievement and motivation in different ways;
- ensure appropriate support and training for staff involved in the admissions process.

4.6. As the development of level 2 and 3 Diplomas and other level 3 awards is progressed, the University will work with other providers (particularly schools and colleges) to ensure that pre-entry curricula and awards reflect the needs of potential HE students and to develop its understanding and recognition of the increasing variety of qualifications and awards which will be presented as appropriate for entry to higher education.

5. Retention and Employability

5.1. The University believes that enabling students to complete an appropriate programme of higher education is equally important as attracting them to it in the first place. For the past three years it has had an extensive Retention Strategy which relates closely to our strategy for Learning, Teaching and Assessment. All full-time undergraduate students are supported in skills development and encouraged to acquire work experience during their programme of study.

5.2. The specific targets and milestones associated with the Retention Strategy are agreed and monitored by the Retention Strategy Group, which meets monthly throughout the year.

6. Fee Arrangements from September 2011

The University of Derby intends to charge a tuition fee of £3375 p.a. from September 2011 for all its full-time undergraduate provision. Different bursary arrangements will apply as below. These will be publicised in advance to students through partners as well as by UoD. Sandwich placement years for both degree and sub-degree provision will be charged at 50% of the standard rate set by HEFCE (ie with no top-up fee) but no bursary will be payable during that year.

7. Bursaries arrangements from September 2011

7.1 The University of Derby operates a range of bursary arrangements. These are based on models of affordability and an assessment of the impact across our student population, and target groups

7.2 The Income Bursary:

Bursary payments to be based on income bands as before but with changes to the amounts:

- Band 1 (income £0 to £26137) £1,000
- Band 2 (Income £26138 – £52550) £600

The payments to be made in 3 instalments

- 40% in December with no conditions
- 30% in March subject to satisfactory progression and engagement in semester 1
- 30% in October of the following year subject to completion (final year students to be paid in year)

7.3 The Progression Bursary:

This is applied as per the current Progression Bursary where students come to the University from Progression (formerly Compact Scheme) partner institutions is set at £200.

All bursaries will be paid to students in accordance with the processes of SLC and details of the levels of payment and entitlement will be reported annually through HEBSS

8. Provision of information on these arrangements for students.

8.1 For continuing students it is important to communicate that new arrangements will not affect them for the duration of their programme of study. This will be undertaken via the Student Support and Information Service (SSIS), the University student portal (UDO), and in conjunction with the University of Derby Students' Union. Details of ongoing financial support will be issued with results information, through on-line and hard copy, and information packs for re-enrollers.

8.2 From Autumn 2007, information will be provided as follows:

WHO	WHERE
Enquirers/applicants	Recruitment and advertising material, hard copy and on-line
	Prospectus
	. Information packs outlining fee payment and bursary arrangements, with exemplars of living costs and details of UoD packages
	Applicant portal of UoD Student Record System for on-line enquiry and response.
	Open/visit days, with information and guidance available
	Telephone and on-line enquiry service
	Individual guidance appointments on campus
	Hot links to other web sites, e.g. DFES, UCAS, Aimhigher.
Registering students	Pre-registration guides
	Referral interviews to support staff
Continuing students	Student handbook
	Re-enrolment packs with results information
	Referral interviews for guidance with support staff
	UDSU magazine (DUSTED)
	University portal (UDO)

8.3 The University's website contains an on-line calculator to enable students to identify the level of support for which they will be eligible.

9. Institutional monitoring arrangements.

9.1. The University of Derby has a Fees and Bursaries Group, which reports into the University's Executive. This group meets in an annual cycle to review the levels of fees and bursaries for both full and part time students. It takes into account intelligence from the faculties, research by the Business Development Unit into sector trends, reportage from Marketing into institutional impact, and from Student Services on individual student impact. Monitoring of and revisions to the Access Agreement form a natural part of its remit.

9.2. The Pro-vice Chancellor Academic Development has Executive authority for the Access Agreement and will report any significant issues to either Executive which meets weekly, or to the wider Corporate Management Team which meets monthly.

9.3 An annual progress report will be made to Academic Board, along with proposed revisions to strategy, and subsequently to the Governing Council.

10 Milestones ands Targets

Additional activity	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
<i>Partnership Office</i>	Increase in progression numbers from partner colleges	100% increase since baseline 2004 of 61			10% p.a. increase from 07/08 to 10/11	All targets redrawn as part of revision to agreements and WPSA alignment
<i>Compact ?progression Scheme devt</i>	40 new Compact enrolments Continued expansion of partner numbers	55 additional enrolments	70 additional enrolments	80 new enrolments	100 new enrolments	All targets redrawn as part of revision to agreements and WPSA alignment
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<i>Disabled access and progression development</i>	9% increase in f/t enrolments, 20% increase in p/t enrolments Based on 2004 numbers	Further 4% f/t and 16% p/t numbers	5% p.a. further increase	5% p.a. further increase	5% p.a. further increase	All targets redrawn as part of revision to agreements and WPSA alignment
<i>Community outreach</i>	Continuing support for a range of outreach initiatives					All targets redrawn as part of revision to agreements and WPSA alignment

11. **Costs associated with additional work funded from additional fee income.** Below are forecast our costs in relation to additional work planned from additional bursaries We started from a base of £3,750,000 assessed as being spent on WP activity in 2004/05

New work post 2006	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11*	11/12*
Estimated additional fee income.	7,870,205	11,341,800	14,203,800	14,047,362	18,295,898
Bursaries for lower socio-economic groups¹	2,271,866	3,399,390	4,431,586	3,966,809	4,604,048
Additional Outreach²: Partnership Office Compact development FE partnerships	250,000	250,000	250,000	255,000	260,000
Total additional costs.	2,521,866	3,649,390	4,681,586	4,221,809	4,864,048
Total WP activity, including that supported through Premium funding and additional fee income	6,271,866	7,399,390	8,431,586	Now reported under WPSA	Now reported under WPSA/AA Annex B

* These two columns are re-calibrated in line with renewed guidelines. Figures are as submitted in November 2010.

12. Projected outcomes

12.1. Targets for increasing participation and retention of students from underrepresented communities are given below against the published HEFCE Performance Indicators. This is slightly problematic because of eighteen months delay in publication of official figures for any academic year. However, we regard them as the most reliable indicators at present, affording benchmarking against our own performance and that of the sector at large. As internal data production becomes more comprehensive, we may seek to substitute our indicators for those of HEFCE.

¹ Bursary payments do not include Compact or postcode awards. Income bursaries only - represent c30% of additional income in 08/09, 31.2%% in 09/10, and c 32,4% in 10/11

² These costs as well as fees and income bursaries will rise with inflation, but are all represented here without inflation.

12.2. Our proposed targets for participation reflect our current success, and are deliberately more modest than those for retention, since all Universities will to some degree be competing more for those students from disadvantaged groups in the first instance. Although participation may increase across the sector as a whole, growth is unlikely to be distributed evenly across institutions. Since UoD has a strong track record for Widening Participation, and those institutions who have less of a record are being challenged most to improve, it may be that in the early stages UoD makes little net gain. This may well be exacerbated by concern amongst the targets groups about potential debt until new arrangements are fully understood, which will be when the first cohorts of students have completed their studies under the new arrangements. As a consequence, our general strategy will continue to be to maintain a strong profile for Widening Participation and to improve retention rates to meet or exceed benchmark.

12.3 targets

These targets are included in the WPSA and so are simply copied here for information.

	Last pub. %	Adjusted benchmark	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Young f/t UG								
-state school	97.3	94.5	97.3	97.3	97.3	97.3	97.3	TBC
-social class IIIM, IV, V	39.7	37.6	39	40	40	40	40	TBC
-low participation neighbourhoods.	12.1	13.4	13.5	14	14.5	14.5	14.5	TBC
Mature f/t UG- no previous HE, low participation neighbourhood.	16	16.4	16.5	17	17.5	17.5	17.5	TBC
P/t UG, no previous HE & low participation neighbourhoods								
- young	12.9	15.7	15	16	17	17	17	TBC
- mature	11.2	9.4	11.5	12	12	12	12	TBC
NON-COMPLETION.								
- young F/t UG	10.4	10.4	9.8	9.6	9.4	9.4	9.4	TBC
- mature F/T UG	16	15.7	15.4	15.2	15	15	15	TBC
- young low participation. Neighbourhood.	12.2	13.1	11.2	10.8	10.4	10.4	10.4	TBC
- mature, no previous HE	16.6	16.2	15.4	15	14.8	14.8	14.8	TBC
- mature with previous HE	12	13.8	12	12	12	12	12	TBC
DSA PARTICIPATION								
F/T UG	2.9	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	TBC
P/T UG	1.1	0.9	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	TBC