University of Leicester

OFFA Access Agreement 2016-17

1. Introduction

1.1. Our Commitment To Fair Access and Social Mobility

The University of Leicester is a leading teaching and research University with a strong track record of social inclusion. Our history and commitment to widening participation is well known. In 2008, when awarding Leicester the title University of the Year, the Times Higher Education panel of judges commended the University for our commitment to widening participation:

“Its continued commitment to, and real success in, widening access to students from non-traditional groups made it the stand-out choice in a very tough competition. On access Leicester is unique among its research intensive peers – it exceeds its benchmark for widening participation.”

Our long-term aim is to live up to the continuing challenge of that recognition. We believe that it is important for the integrity of higher education that all those who can benefit from studying at a research-intensive, highly selective university do so regardless of background. Our commitment to widening participation is also fuelled by our fervent belief that higher education has a transformative impact on the lives of students and that for those from underrepresented groups this impact greatly enhances their social mobility. As the 2010 Browne Review identified graduates on average have:

- better employment prospects including higher wages and job satisfaction
- better health including reduced likelihood of depression
- better social life including being more active in their communities and less likely to break the law
- better family life including actively engaging with their children’s education

Only by supporting those who have experienced economic and/or educational deprivation to enter and succeed in higher education can we ensure that they too share in this graduate premium.

1.2. Our Widening Participation Performance

Our performance against HESA Widening Participation performance indicators provides evidence of our success in achieving our aims and objectives. We are a University with “average proportion[s] of under-represented students” – i.e. we sit broadly on our benchmarks for recruitment and retention (indeed we are one of the very few research intensive universities who can consistently make this claim). In this Access Agreement we commit to spending within the 22% to 26% range recommended by OFFA for a University that performs at this level until at least 2017/18.

1.3. Outline of the Content of our Agreement
This Access Agreement includes undergraduate full- and part-time provision\(^1\), as well as postgraduate initial teacher training provision, and outlines:

- Our intentions for setting fees for students entering in 2015.
- Our proposed scholarship scheme to support the brightest and best students in realising their opportunity to study with us – regardless of background or circumstance.
- Our assessment of our Widening Participation performance, including both entry and retention of non-traditional students.
- Our commitment to an expanded range of outreach and student recruitment initiatives, including:
  - collaborative initiatives and admissions policies which lead to fair access to this and other research intensive universities.
  - collaborative work with local schools and other local HE providers to provide a coherent and comprehensive programme of aspiration and attainment raising activities for a targeted cohort of students across the city and county.
  - increased staffing for effective information, advice and guidance, communications, planning and evaluation of our WP outreach.
- Our commitment to retaining the most vulnerable students through robust and effective financial, advisory and academic support.
- Our commitment to supporting the personal development of our students, ensuring they achieve success both academically and professionally.
- Specific, measurable targets on admissions and retention, to consolidate our position as the research intensive university with the most consistent record of welcoming and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Milestones for the delivery of a range of individual and collaborative initiatives, working with appropriate partners regionally and nationally, and embedding the strongest and most effective elements of previously Aim Higher and TDA funded activities.
- How we intend to communicate our fees, scholarships and other student support to prospective students, applicants, parents and advisers.
- Our widening participation work with relation to equality and diversity.
- How we are involving students in our widening participation work

This Access Agreement should be read in conjunction with our HEFCE Widening Participation Strategic Statement which demonstrates how we manage our commitment to widening

\(^1\) Note that as our proposed fees for part-time study are below the basic cap set by OFFA, this Access Agreement does not propose any additional OFFA countable expenditure in this area (subject to the possibility of exceptional cases noted in section 3 below).
participation, and illustrates the breadth and depth of this commitment ensuring that all can benefit from our activities.

2. Our Financial Commitment To Widening Participation

As a university that recruits in line with its benchmarks OFFA guidance has suggested that we look to reinvest between 22% and 26% of our higher tuition fee income into measures to support fair access and student success.

Yet, as recorded in the Monitoring Returns we submitted to OFFA in both 2012/13 and 2013/14 we have spent significantly more than this recommended level. In light of the planned changes to our scholarships in 2016/17 (see Section 4.1) and OFFA’s own suggestion that universities with strong records in widening participation can seek to reduce their expenditure in this area we believe that we can secure real efficiencies without compromising our achievements. Indeed we believe that the proposals we have put forward will not just be more efficient but also significantly more effective in supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

These savings we will make by reforming our merit-based scholarships in 2016/17 will ultimately reduce our OFFA-countable spending by approximately £600,000. However it will not be until 2018/19 that the majority of these savings will be realised with our OFFA-countable spending in 2017/18 still projected to be in excess of 24% of higher tuition fee income.

We accept that we may need new spending commitments in future agreements to ensure that the figure for 2018/19 does not fall below 24%, and have provisionally committed £200,000 on additional student success measures from this year. However we reserve the right to roll this spending back should our estimated higher tuition fee income be lower than expected or our OFFA-countable expenditure be greater than expected.

The reasons we feel that our higher tuition fee income may be lower than expected, include reduced recruitment stemming from greater competition due to the end of Student Number Controls

The reasons we feel that our OFFA-countable spending may be higher than expected, include changing recruitment patterns with the potential for grade deflation and curriculum reform increasing the number of OFFA-countable students receiving our scholarships or other student support. We have already remodelled the estimated OFFA-countable proportion of our forthcoming expenditure on our new internship scheme due to new evidence that at least 75% of our Careers Service users are from widening participation backgrounds.

However, the primary danger of our overspending on OFFA-countable measures is the possibility that the Government will once again cut funding for widening participation or require universities to provide match-funding for new initiatives. In the past few years the Government has repeatedly made decisions at short notice that significantly undermine our ability to accurately predict our future expenditure on widening participation.

- Due to the decision announced in December 2014 to temporarily expand the Postgraduate Support Scheme to all institutions, we will be spending up to an additional £275,000 on helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress to postgraduate courses in 2015/16.
• We are still working through the implications of the end of separate Access to Learning Funding for hardship grants and have not had final guidance on the additional responsibilities incurred by universities due to the reforms of the Disabled Students’ Allowance. There is also no firm commitment to maintain the HEFCE Student Opportunity Allocation at either its current level or in its current form, and we note that there are several ongoing reviews into this funding stream that have still not reported.

• In 2016/17 and even in later years to a lesser extent, we will still be working in the shadow of the decision by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills to cut HEFCE funding for the National Scholarship Programme in 2014/15. This was an announcement made after we had already offered these scholarships to students. We therefore believe it sensible to wait until we develop our 2018/19 Access Agreement to see if the factors described above mean that our estimates for our higher tuition fee income are too optimistic, or if we are providing greater OFFA-countable support to our students than originally anticipated. Should additional spending still be seen as necessary we would also have a greater understanding of where that spending would have the most impact. We believe this approach is fully in the spirit of both OFFA’s guidance and our own commitment to widening participation.

3. Leadership, Oversight and Evaluation

3.1. Institutional Leadership and Oversight

The University of Leicester has a strong commitment to ensuring fair access and student success for those from underrepresented groups. The extent of this commitment can be shown in our work to develop structures within the University to ensure strong strategic leadership of our work in this area.

Our Pro-Vice Chancellor for Student Experience works to link together and further develop strategies to ensure an effective and high-quality recruitment experience, the widening of participation in higher education, and the successful transition of our students to the challenges and opportunities of independent study and independent living.

The post has explicit focus on the University’s role in fostering social mobility, including the development of strategies to enhance the success of students joining the University from a range of backgrounds. The post has been taken up by Professor Mark Peel, who has significant experience in researching these issues and in developing effective, evidence-based approaches to student access, transition, retention and success. He has identified as key priorities:

• A greater focus on the school-to-university transition, further highlighting the extension of the ‘student lifecycle’ to include the period of aspiration, information and preparation prior to university entry;
• Expanding the scope of our widening participation partnerships with schools and sixth-form colleges in the city, the region and the nation, including work with parents and teachers as well as prospective students;
• An induction and first year experience strategy that enhances engagement and retention, especially for ‘first in family’ and ‘first generation’ students;
- The development of effective on-campus and blended ‘bridge to university’ programmes for learners returning to study and for other students who would benefit from a longer academic and social induction.

Professor Peel will be supported in this by the Director of Student Recruitment and Outreach, designed to ensure that widening participation is fully embedded within the wider work of the university. In particular they will work with the managers of the Student Recruitment and Outreach teams to maximise synergies and so ensure the needs of disadvantaged students are at the heart of our wider recruitment work.

These new posts will complement a strong existing committee and working group system that brings together practitioners and policymakers working in widening participation from across the university. In 2012 we reformed our Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee to include Widening Participation in both its title and remit and created a dedicated Widening Participation Working Group to feed into it. The Student Recruitment, Admissions and Widening Participation Committee and the Widening Participation Working Group will be chaired by Professor Peel. The committee will formally report to the Academic Policy Committee, which ensures a close fit with broader discussions of academic strategy, and Professor Peel will also regularly report on initiatives and outcomes to the University’s Leadership Team and Executive Board, ensuring a consistent review of performance against the specific milestones in this agreement.

These committees, supported by the Student Recruitment Team, will also work to engage colleagues in the commitments made in this Agreement by embedding best practice across the University. To facilitate this we have developed working groups responsible for widening participation and outreach in each of the University’s Colleges, through which support will be provided to departmental widening participation leads.

### 3.2. Monitoring and evaluation

In 2012 we created a new Widening Participation Policy post within our School and College Services Team that is working to develop a more systematic approach to the evaluation of the University’s widening participation performance. This work will include drafting a formal widening participation evaluation strategy and an operational schedule for analytical and evaluative work. Working in conjunction with the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership will ensure that all our centrally-organised outreach activity is evaluated with reference to participant numbers, demographics and feedback.

We have prioritised our HEFCE National Networks for Collaborative Outreach Institutional Allocation towards enhancing our work in this area with the creation of a new Widening Participation Evaluation Officer. They will work with the Widening Participation Policy Officer to evaluate pre-sixteen outreach activities that the University of Leicester delivers as part of the REACH Partnership and other key projects such as the Leicester Enhanced Access Programme. They will also work with colleagues across the partnership to measure the overall impact of the work of local schools, colleges and universities to widen participation in Leicester and Leicestershire. Additionally the REACH Partnership is working with EMWPREP and other East Midlands NNCOs to enhance the tracking and monitoring of activities and activity participants.

Monitoring and evaluation of our widening participation work is currently undertaken by the Widening Participation Policy Officer in conjunction with the Planning Office. We closely monitor the demographic breakdown of our student population and specifically look to see
how this compares to the demographics of the students that we support financially with our scholarships and bursaries, and those we target with our outreach activities. We are currently exploring ways to best provide additional capacity in this area as we develop the new Division of Policy, Planning and Change.

We are also keen to better utilise our world class expertise in educational studies and measuring impact more generally amongst our academic staff. Professor Emma Smith is in the process of launching a research network focused on better understanding the reasons behind and impact of educational inequality. We are also working with our Department of Sociology to explore the possibility of providing studentships for Masters dedicated towards conducting original research related to widening participation.

3.3. Building a Widening Participation Ethos

We are proud of our long commitment to widening participation and have recently taken further steps to embed this ethos in our staff body. Over the past year we have held regular meetings of a Widening Participation Practitioners Network that brings together those involved in widening participation from across the University. Here staff members are encouraged to share ideas, raise concerns and ask questions about the impact and direction of our work to widen participation.

On the recommendation of this Network we held our first-ever Widening Participation Summit in December 2014. The summit was attended by over 80 staff members who received presentations from the Director of Fair Access as well as leading university figures including our President and Vice-Chancellor. They also had the chance to discuss the work of the university to support key target groups and what more we can do to widen participation. The event was positively received and it is our intention to hold another Widening Participation Summit in 2015.

At this event we also awarded several staff members our Widening Participation Award. This is a new award designed to recognise those staff members who have gone above and beyond to support those from widening participation backgrounds. The aim of this award is to celebrate the breadth of widening participation work conducted throughout the university, and encourage other staff members to get involved by raising awareness of the work undertaken by widening participation practitioners in the rest of the University.

To further incentivise a broader range of staff members to engage with the widening participation agenda we have recently created the Widening Participation Impact Pot that will provide staff members from across the university the opportunity to bid for resources to fund new projects designed to secure fair access and greater student success for those from underrepresented groups. In the Impact Pot’s first year of operation we have already distributed £23,000 to seven different varied projects. These projects were:

a) Debating Training for Year 12 Students
b) Sample Medicine Day for Year 12 Students
c) Evolutionary Biology Taster Sessions for BME Year 10 Students
d) Supporting Transition To GCSE Geography Through University Year 9 Festival
e) Addressing the Male Minority in Undergraduate Psychology
f) Wheelchairs for Sport at the University
g) Research into the study skills of ROPS/LEAP Students

4. Tuition fee levels
The University of Leicester proposes a basic graduate contribution level of £9,000 across all full-time undergraduate programmes and postgraduate Initial Teacher Training programmes. Tuition Fees for Sandwich Courses will continue to be set at £1000. The university will continue to provide a comprehensive programme of scholarships (fee waivers and targeted student support).

We naturally must stress that should tuition fees in 2016/17 be reduced to £6,000 as proposed by the Labour Party we would have to revisit not just the commitments made in this Agreement but also in previous ones due to the proposed reduction applying to all years of study. A particular issue will be the extensive commitments we have made to students on the basis of being able to charge £9,000 including offering £1,000 scholarships or fee-waivers.

Our part-time fees vary from £5,350 to £5,800 full-time equivalent, and the fees charged in any one year are below the basic cap set by OFFA.

5. Scholarships

5.1. A More Efficient Approach to Financial Support

We propose to maintain our current spending on the University of Leicester Scholarship, through which every year we provide 800 students from disadvantaged backgrounds, primarily those from low income households, a £1,000 cash bursary. This needs based scholarship will also continue to be available to all students who enter the university having completed a Compact Scheme supported by the University of Leicester (i.e. Realising Opportunities or Leicester Enhanced Access Programme). We also work with specific target schools to ensure that disadvantaged students who don’t meet either criterion can also receive the scholarships. This will provide crucial support to students who due to the relative lack of parental support often struggle to cover their living costs at university.

We accept the evidence recently produced by OFFA that much of the money spent by universities on financial support does not have sufficient impact. We still believe that offering tuition fee-waivers was an important transitional measure as the sector went through the difficult process of explaining the progressive nature of the graduate repayment system to prospective students and key influencers including parents, schools and media. We now believe that students understand the crucial differences between student and commercial loans, something that is testament to the hard work of university outreach teams across the country. Therefore as fee-waivers are no longer necessary to reassure prospective students concerned about the dangers of future debt we have to look far more critically at the practical benefit students garner from them. The reality is that students do not gain any additional spending power during their degree and even after graduation fee-waivers will only ultimately benefit the minority of graduates who earn enough to pay off their student loan in full.

It is therefore proposed that instead of receiving a fee-waiver all non-medical students who enter the University in 2016/17 with grades of AAB or equivalent will receive a £1,000 transition scholarship. We have focused this scholarship on the first-year in order to maximise its positive impact on encouraging people to progress to higher education as well as the consistent evidence that the first year of university study is the most expensive due to the higher cost of living and the need to buy learning materials such as textbooks.

We propose that this scholarship will be delivered through a ‘cashcard’ that students can use to purchase items at university outlets. These items will include buying food on campus, paying for their accommodation and purchasing books and stationary. We will also be
investigating whether the cashcard can also be used to purchase items such as sports centre membership.

As explained in Section 1.4 this reform will ultimately reduce our OFFA-countable spending by £600,000, but these savings will not be achieved in full until 2018/19 and there will be no savings in 2016/17. We believe that these savings are justified both by our strong record in widening participation and in the way they have been achieved without disadvantaging students. Indeed the new Chancellor’s Scholarship will actually provide a more tangible benefit to students.

In addition to our two main schemes, the university will continue to offer bursaries to all home undergraduates under the age of 25 who have experience of living in local authority care. This bursary will consist of an annual cash payment of £2,000 for every year of study for 2015/16 new entrants. It is estimated that in 2015-6 around fifteen students across all years will be receiving this bursary.

5.2 Undergraduate Scholarship administration, advice and support

The University will invest further in advice and support, to administer the above scheme, and to provide advice to prospective students. We will continue our commitments in our previous Access Agreement to invest £117,000 to support scholarship administration arrangements and provide advice and support to prospective students.

5.3 Increased support through discretionary Student Hardship Fund.

We have traditionally used OFFA-countable money to increase the funding provided to ad hoc hardship grants and loans. In 2013-14 this funding amounted to £300K which we increased by a further £66,000 in 2014-15 to mitigate the cuts to the Access to Learning Fund. In light of the abolition of the ALF we are currently evaluating our Student Hardship Fund as we are now no longer working to the guidelines issued by HEFCE. This evaluation will identify ways in which we can better align this spending with our strategic priorities in widening participation to maximise the positive impact.

6. Assessing our Widening Participation performance

A summary of our performance in the HESA PIs can be found in appendix 1.

6.1 Full-time Undergraduate

**Intake**

Our young full-time first degree intake from state schools in 2013 was 88.7%, from NS-SEC groups 4-7, 27.6% and from low participation neighbourhoods, 8.3%. These figures have been steady for a number of years, despite the challenges created by the increase in tuition fees.

Whether comparing these with national averages, our peer institutions (who are mainly Russell Group institutions), or with our own benchmarks, these figures are strong. The state school intake is above national average, in excess of our benchmark. Our NS-SEC 4-7 intake and our intake from low participation neighbourhoods meet benchmarks and have historically been amongst the highest in our peer group.
Our mature student intake overall is within benchmark, as is our intake for mature students from low-participation areas. This achievement has again been made in the face of the challenges created by the increase in tuition fees.

This demonstrates that Leicester is performing strongly against all possible comparators, and is making a significant contribution to improving WP nationally.

**Retention**

Our retention of young students is strong. Non-continuation rates for young entrants, including those from low participation neighbourhoods, remain low and in excess of our benchmarks. This reflects the ongoing development of our pastoral care and learner support methods, and indicates again that by any standards, we have the least distance to travel in achieving success in widening participation.

We are also very pleased to report a much improved situation regarding mature students. Having previously failed to meet our benchmark, this year we met it due to a five percentage point fall in the proportion of mature students not continuing. This is the lowest level of mature student non-continuation we have ever recorded since this target was set in 2006/7.

We are however not complacent and will continue to work to better understand the student experience for both young and mature students at the University of Leicester, identifying ways to improve how we support them. As we explain in Section 7.2, a key emphasis for our future work in this area will be to proactively support students as they enter the university and preemptively identify those who need further support before they run into serious problems.

### 6.2 Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training

In 2013 the proportion of PGCE students who are BME remained constant with the previous year at a level in excess of an eighth of all traditional ITT students enrolled at the University of Leicester. Our gender split likewise saw little variation from the previous year. Our retention remains high and has risen slightly compared with the previous year.

### 6.3 Widening Participation Outreach

The University of Leicester collects feedback at all centrally-organised WP activities by asking participants to complete post-activity feedback questionnaires. These questionnaires formed the basis of several specific activity evaluation reports.

These reports showed that the University of Leicester’s Widening Participation and Outreach work has had a positive impact with the overwhelming majority of activity participants saying that attending had (amongst other things) motivated them to do better in their current studies, helped them think about what they want to do in the future and encouraged them to progress onto further education.

Through the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership we also monitor the demographics of those attending our WP activities to evaluate the effectiveness of our targeting processes. We have seen a noticeable improvement in the targeting of our activities due to the partnership successfully working with local education authorities to provide all schools with information on who amongst their cohorts is from a widening participation background as had happened until 2011 through Aim Higher. We calculate that over 90% of all participants on campus visits organised by School and College Services were from a target group.
6.5 Local Higher Education Participation Trends

Research produced by the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership has shown that in Leicestershire there has been a sustained increase in successful progression of young people coming from low participation neighbourhoods. From 2011/2 to 2012/3 there was a 9% increase in the number of young applicants from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (POLAR2 Quintile 1) accepted onto a university course. This was an escalation of a trend that since 2001/02 has seen the number of such applicants entering university increase by 79%. When analysing HE participation in Leicestershire against other measures of neighbourhood deprivation (IMD and its most relevant indices in EST and IDACI) we also see similar levels of improvement.

The picture is more mixed with relation to young applications from lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 4-7) being accepted onto a university course. In 2012/3 the numbers of such applicants was 4.8% lower than the number for 2011/2. This however is in contradiction of a long-term trend that saw the number of such applicants accepted onto university places increase by 5.5% since 2001/2.

6.6 Summary assessment of our Widening Participation performance

The University is rightly proud of its record in this area, and regards our performance in both widening participation and in retention as strong. We also rightly recognise that for the sector to move forward, we need to play our part. We are a university that aspires not only to continuing improvement, but to influence and leadership in fostering widening participation, student access and success, and the role of educational opportunity in social mobility.

7. Widening Participation Outreach

7.1 Introduction

Our plans are to continue with the activities that we know work well. Our recent success is best shown in the continued improvement in rates of HE participation amongst local students (s. Section 5.5 for more information) and our consistent success in meeting our benchmarks.

While evaluation of the impact of individual events is difficult we have invested significant resources in improving the evaluation of our activities, as well as communicating these results to stakeholders. These evaluations demonstrate the impact of our activities on participants. In 2013/14 they reported that:

- 84% of Primary School Campus Visits participants agreed that "the visit has increased my confidence about studying at university"
- 90% of Goal Setting and Action Planning participants agreed that “The activity has motivated me to do well with my current studies”
- 91% of University Experience Days participants agreed “The activity has increased my confidence about studying at university/higher education level”
- 93% of Summer School participants agreed that “The Summer School has encouraged me to study at university in the future”
- 100% of teachers agreed that their “students have learnt new things that will help them at school”
Meanwhile, an independent evaluation of our Students in Classrooms scheme praised the scheme for having “direct benefits for the undergraduate students taking part in the scheme, the pupils in the participating schools, and the schools themselves”.

This is in line with evaluation of previous years outreach work that caused us to expand our Campus Visits (s. Section 7.3) program while at the same time increase the support for our Summer Schools (s. Section 7.11). We have also taken into account national research undertaken by a wide range of organisations (including OFFA, HEFCE and the Government’s Independent Reviewer for Child Poverty and Social Mobility) that encourage working with younger age groups, greater collaboration between institutions, the greater involvement of students when delivering widening participation activities and developing a WP dimension in work on Access to the Professions (s. Section 7.10).

7.2. Our financial commitment to outreach

Our financial commitments to OFFA countable outreach for 2016-17 are a total of £1,498K, which includes £1,181K pay and non-pay in respect of the above activities, £200K committed under the pre-2012 agreements, and £117K for the scholarship support and advice (both old and new) described above in section 3.3. As explained in Section 2 this is dependent on our higher tuition fee income meeting the projections upon which this Agreement has been built.

7.3. Campus Visits

We run a comprehensive range of campus visits targeted at children and young people from widening participation backgrounds that introduce them to higher education through sampling our facilities and participating in interactive activities. We believe in intervening early to raise aspirations. Our established programme of University Experience Days for groups from local Secondary Schools is now being complemented by running Visit Days for groups from local Primary Schools. These are in addition to our programme of Goal-Setting Workshops where we go into schools and help them think through what they need to do to achieve their goals. We have recently expanded the resources allocated to this activity through the recruitment of a new Widening Participation Coordinator and are committed to welcoming over 2,300 children and young people in 2016-7 to the University of Leicester as participants through these activities.

7.4 Information, Advice and Guidance and Student Recruitment

When conducting our outreach and student recruitment activities, we have widening participation at the centre of our planning. This means that while we undertake information, advice, guidance and recruitment activities in a wide range of schools and colleges, we specifically target schools and colleges locally where there is a larger cohort of non-traditional students to ensure they receive the strongest possible support. Strong working relationships with local schools enables us to attract students from non-traditional backgrounds who are less likely to travel away from home to university. While there are no plans for further investment beyond what has been promised in previous Access Agreements, the recent investment in increasing the staffing and resources dedicated to IAG will allow us to continue to develop our already comprehensive suite of information, advice and guidance.

7.5 Building relationships with enquirers, applicants and with younger age groups

Key to our recent success has been robust systems for communicating with enquirers and applicants. We are investing further in this area with a view to enhancing our communications with students who have accessed our widening participation activities – such as providing
information regarding key subject choices at the relevant times. To achieve this we are currently developing a pre-sixteen communications action plan.

### 7.6 Realising Opportunities

University of Leicester is a member of Realising Opportunities (RO), a unique collaborative partnership of research intensive universities developing and delivering a national fair access scheme which promotes social and geographic mobility for students from under-represented groups. Realising Opportunities has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the tracking of students through the HEAT database and UCAS.

The award-winning Realising Opportunities programme, developed through shared best practice, provides support for students through interventions designed to raise aspirations, develop skills and enable them to demonstrate their potential to succeed at a research intensive university. These interventions are offered locally and nationally and include a National Student Conference, ongoing support and encouragement from a trained student e-mentor and an academic assessment element. Successful completion of RO will result in additional consideration given to applications through UCAS from all Partner universities, and the potential for an alternative offer worth up to 40 UCAS points or equivalent. At current, the University of Leicester offers all students who complete RO the full alternative offer. In 2015/16 we will be for the first time making this alternative available to students applying for medicine.

Each of the participating institutions has committed future funds to the central operating budget to ensure the on-going delivery and development of RO to 31 July 2017. For 2016 – 2017 this will be a maximum of £37,000 per Partner.

RO’s independent evaluators, the Institute for Effective Education, commented in December 2014 “It is evident, for example, given the emphasis on collaboration and outreach activities in the HEFCE/OFFA National Strategy (2014 p94), that RO is ‘ahead of the game’ in terms of these activities. The programme has matured, with some of the collaborative relationships being in place for six years or more, and now has long-standing and sustained relationships across the university, college and school sectors.”

Targets are contingent on UCAS providing the RO Central Team with the required data to evidence progression of RO students to Research Intensive Universities. Additionally targets beyond 2017 are notional.

### 7.7 Leicester Enhanced Access Programme (LEAP)

In 2014-15 the University of Leicester launched its own compact scheme called the Leicester Enhanced Access Programme (LEAP). Building on our continued involvement in the Realising Opportunities Programme, LEAP allows us to further expand our offer available to a highly selected group of Widening Participation students, who have the ability and the potential to thrive at an institution such as Leicester.

Through a structured two year programme of engagement, participants will benefit from a series of supported enrichment activities designed to increase their study and interpersonal skills and better prepare them for the independent learning environment that Higher Education offers.
LEAP activities include a student conference, e-mentoring from our current undergraduates, a study skills development module and a fully supported assessed academic element. These, alongside a number of other enrichment activities, including a four day residential summer school, will help ensure that participants are better prepared for the transition into Higher Education. The successful launch of the programme is a testament to the significant investment the University has made in terms of both providing additional financial resource but also directing existing staff members from areas such as the Student Learning Development Unit, Student Recruitment, Marketing and Communications, Academic Departments, Creative Services and the Planning Team to support the development and delivery of this key programme.

Participants who successfully complete the programme will receive additional consideration for all courses and an alternative offer worth up to 2 A-level grades (or equivalent) off our standard offer for the majority of our courses (discussions are still ongoing with Medicine as to the level of alternative offer to be made).

Every LEAP student who successfully completes the programme and progresses to study here at Leicester will receive a £1,000 cash bursary for every year of study. Additionally every LEAP student who fulfils the conditions of their LEAP alternative offer will also receive our academic-merit scholarship; this will either be a fee-waiver or cashcard depending on the year they started the programme.

During the initial pilot year of LEAP (2014-15) we had aimed to recruit 75 Year 12 students from our local East Midlands area to join the programme. This target was unfortunately not reached despite extensive work with local schools to persuade students to enrol onto the programme as only 39 were recruited. We are currently reviewing the programme to see how we can increase the number of students recruited onto LEAP. Therefore whilst we are still hopeful of recruiting 75 students onto LEAP in both 2015/16 and 2016/17 this target may have to be scaled down should we not be able to identify ways to overcome the issues we have encountered this year.

7.8 Students in Schools

As promised in our previous Access Agreement, we are continuing to expand and develop a suite of classroom placement opportunities to replace those once provided through the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) under the Student Associates Scheme (SAS). When placing our students in local schools, those schools with a higher proportion of pupils from widening participation backgrounds are actively targeted to host placements. Over the past four years we have on average placed students in 12 local schools that are defined as disadvantaged using criteria produced by EMWPREP. Students undergo a thorough recruitment and selection process and receive nine hours of training to prepare them prior to placement, ensuring that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively help the children and young people they will be working with. This training includes strong guidance on issues connected with social and economic deprivation and the impact these factors have on educational outcomes.

We provide students from all academic departments the opportunity to volunteer for intense placements in local schools towards the end of the academic year under our ‘Tomorrow’s Teachers’ scheme. Meanwhile we also support seven academic departments in delivering a specially tailored academic module. Students in these academic departments are able to apply for a second or final year optional module about communicating their subject, which includes
a placement in a local school. These placements are also strongly targeted at schools with a higher proportion of pupils from widening participation backgrounds.

We plan to continue to work with local schools to place more of our students in the classroom where they can provide practical assistance and act as positive role models to children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

7.9 Working with Student Societies and Volunteers

We believe that when it comes to inspiring children and young people to enter higher education no one can act as a better role model than current students. At Leicester we involve students in our widening participation work through facilitating school placements (s. Section 7.8 above) but also believe that our students should have more opportunities to work in schools. However for that potential to be harnessed students need assistance from the University to ensure that their activities are properly targeted at those in most need, as well as receiving the planning and resources they need to be effective.

We have invested in our capacity to facilitate more student involvement in widening participation activities and build a more comprehensive partnership with the Students’ Union through the creation of a new Widening Participation & Outreach Coordinator position. While this position is based within the Students’ Union it will be directly funded by the University as part of its commitments under Outreach.

Since we recruited for this role in September the post-holder has started enhancing the involvement of student volunteers in raising aspirations amongst local children and young people from underrepresented groups. Using student group expertise we have developed a new format for Masterclasses where the academics and students from a department work together to give visitors a full picture of the student experience at the University of Leicester. Over the next few years we aim to deliver more joint projects like this with an emphasis on working with students to experiment with new activities that best utilise the unique contribution that they can make. We are also in the process of developing procedures to have a pool of trained students who are prepared to go into schools for university-organised events or in response to request from schools. We are also working with local schools to explore the possibility of moving beyond just offering one-off visits during term-time to also providing after-school clubs and school holiday activities.

A key focus will be working with our performance societies, sports and media groups. Developing activities with these groups will not just highlight the full breadth and depth of opportunities on offer at universities but will also increase the cultural capital of young people by exposing them to new hobbies and pastimes. In doing so we hope it will help combat the increasing monopolisation of the country’s elite sports and creative industries by people from privileged backgrounds. An example of this unique approach is our forthcoming event in conjunction with Leicestershire County Cricket where we will be inviting pupils from local schools to a visit day at Grace Road. The event will include:

- A tour of Grace Road and short presentation on the history of cricket
- A short practical session on how to play the sport involving Leicester University students
- A cricket-themed interactive maths workshop led by a University academic
- A chance to see Leicester and De Montfort University students contest the Varsity Cricket Match
We believe that this event showcases the opportunities open to university students and provides our students an opportunity to act as role models. However it also introduces to cricket, a sport that has increasing problems in attracting participants from state education, especially those who are from a Black or Ethnic Minority background.

7.10. **Access to the Professions**

As we outlined in Section 1.1 at the University of Leicester we understand that widening participation is only meaningful if it successfully enhances social mobility. It is not enough to just get talented people from disadvantaged backgrounds to come to university we also need to ensure that those with the ability to progress into key professions are encouraged and enabled to do so.

To this end, we have recently created a new Access to the Professions Officer role that will operate at a senior level in the university to organise activities and bring together colleagues to support the greater progression into high-status professions or onto postgraduate education of those from disadvantaged backgrounds both within the general population and our current study body. They will do this by both working with young people and other relevant groups to raise aspirations and where possible provide Information, Advice and Guidance to those considering a career in professions such as Medicine and Law. They will also work with our School of Law, Medical School and Graduate School to ensure that our policies and procedures encourage the widest range of people to enter onto one our professional or postgraduate degree courses.

This role will build on the work we already do to promote medicine and law to students from widening participation backgrounds. This work includes providing alternative offers in both subjects as part of our compact schemes and organising imaginative outreach activities such as the recent Year 12 Clinical Skills Training Day and supporting Debating Clubs in association with Thomson Reuters Legal Department. A core component of this work has been outreach and mentoring work undertaken by our Medical and Law students. This includes Med-Reach, a student society founded by Medical Students with support from the University’s Medical School and School and College Services Team, Med-Reach is an innovative scheme that facilitates student involvement with children and young people from widening participation backgrounds. The scheme offers workshops supporting the science curriculum and to help young people to identify their broader learning and life goals in addition to offering specific advice and guidance for young people who wish to study medicine and health related professions. At the same time our widening participation team has supported the Pro-Bono Society’s Street Law group to run events in local schools with high proportion of disadvantaged students. These sessions have focused on improving legal literacy amongst young people and encourage them to consider a career in law.

7.11 **Summer Schools**

We are committed to continuing to offer a number of Summer Schools engaging young people from years 8 through 12 in a range of in-depth academic activities on campus. These will include at least two residential subject based Summer Schools for younger age groups. Since the end of Aim Higher we have secured philanthropic support from Santander Universities UK of £30,000 per year to contribute towards the direct costs for running at least two summer schools for younger age groups in the spring of 2016. This is due to continue until 2017. In addition to contributing the costs of administration and management of this activity, we will also provide an additional £5,000 to the activity’s operational budget.
We also organise Summer Schools through our Realising Opportunities and Leicester Enhanced Access Programme schemes (s. Section 6.6 and 6.7 for details on either scheme), with approximately thirty places provided to RO students from outside our own cohort. In total we will welcome over 200 students to stay on campus for a residential summer school.

7.12 Work with Looked After Children & Care Leavers

We work closely with Loughborough and De Montfort Universities to support young people with experience of living in care to enter higher education. Together the three universities host a two-day non-residential Summer School which gives students the opportunity to visit all three campuses and sample higher education. The three universities also run a Training Day for Care Professionals and Foster Carers that provide those working with Looked After Children advice on how to help young people navigate higher education processes and the opportunity to question educational specialists.

Additionally as a University we have recently started to run a Campus Visit Day for Primary School Children who have experience of living in local authority care. This event aims to boost self-esteem and raise aspirations amongst these children at the youngest possible age by reassuring them that despite their current or recent experiences they can still achieve in education and ultimately have the ability to progress to higher education.

We have also developed strong collaborative relationships with the two virtual schools within the county to maximise the opportunities and outcomes for these young people. We are proactively targeting these students to encourage them to get involved in either of our compact schemes and recently organised a work experience placement in our Genetics Department for one of these virtual schools’ student. We have also worked closely with Leicester City Council and other local stakeholders to support the YMCA’s successful lottery bid to form Y-POD, a new service dedicated to enhancing Care Leavers life prospects by improving their access to housing, health and education, employment and training.

Additionally we provide students with experience of living in care with additional financial support during their studies (s. 4.1 above for details).

The strength of our commitment to making higher education accessible to those with experience of care is also reflected in our working to the level of best practice required to receive the Buttle UK Quality Mark since 2007. We supported the establishment of a HEFCE NNCO for Care Leavers that we expect to lead on the development of a replacement for the Quality Mark and provide coordination for the work of universities across the country in this area.

7.13 Collaborations

REACH Partnership

The three local HEI’s in Leicester and Leicestershire (the University of Leicester, De Montfort University and Loughborough University) have successfully developed Reach, a new partnership with each other, the two local authorities and groups representing the different schools and colleges in the area. The partnership will co-ordinate a wide range of events for learners aimed at raising aspirations, attainment and progression to FE and HE, it will robustly track, monitor and evaluate the work, and its success will depend on the work and co-operation of all partners.
Each University has committed to fund a co-ordinator and central office based at the University of Leicester with a contribution of approximately £20K per year. We have also successfully secured £240,000 of HEFCE NNCO funding for the partnership which is being invested to achieve long-term enhancements to capacity. This additional capacity includes developing our website, enhancing our ability to measure the impact of outreach activities through more sophisticated monitoring of participants, supporting disabled learners, raising awareness of College-based Higher Education and empowering local colleges to better prepare their students to progress to higher education.

**East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership**

Since 2011/2 the University has been a member of a partnership with seven universities in the East Midlands to fund a research and evaluation resource based at Loughborough University. This resource enables robust targeting of the cohort (in collaboration with the local authorities), robust tracking and monitoring of the cohort and attendees at WP events, plus the capacity to undertake specific programmes of research and evaluation for individual partners.

Each University has committed £12K per year to the partnership to be confirmed annually on a rolling basis.

**Higher Education Officers Association (HELOA)**

We work with HELOA both regionally and nationally, to engage with those in schools, colleges and careers services advising prospective students, to offer support and training to staff in HE liaison roles, and to share best practice on HE liaison issues. Specifically in the Midlands region, we are represented on the regional group committee and support the delivery an annual conference for Teachers and Advisers, and an annual training conference for HE liaison staff.

**National Educational Opportunities Network (NEON)**

Founded in late 2011, NEON works to establish closer cooperation between those engaged in widening participation work and promote greater professionalism amongst those involved in this area of work. We support these objectives and as a founding member have worked closely with the organisation since its creation. We currently play an active role in the organisation, including being represented on its Executive Committee and several of its working groups.

**Colleges-University of Leicester Network (CULN)**

Comprising 19 Further Education Colleges and three Higher Education Institutions across the East and West Midlands, the Colleges-University of Leicester Network (CULN) has provided a forum to optimise collaboration between Further and Higher Education Institutions for the benefit of staff and learners for over 10 years. The partnership has delivered a wide range of collaborative events and initiative for students and staff at member colleges aimed at improving the transition for students between member colleges and university. The nature of the partner colleges mean that the initiatives and activities reach significant numbers of under-represented groups, and from next year, the student-facing activities will be monitored and evaluated alongside our other widening participation work.

### 7.14 Part-time recruitment and outreach

The University offers a wide range of part-time study across a range of departments and centres, by local study and by distance learning. The fee for these courses is below the basic
cap set by OFFA and so no new OFFA countable expenditure is being included in this agreement. Never-the-less, it is hoped that OFFA recognise the significant contribution that our part-time provision makes to enabling a wide range of learners to access Higher Education, for whom this would otherwise not be possible.

We invest significantly in work to reach out to prospective students, and in our Vaughan College of Lifelong Learning who co-ordinate our locally delivered part-time degree programmes, which make up just one part of our part-time provision. Our expenditure on this work is in excess of £60K.

7.15 Department and College based outreach

A very significant amount of outreach activity and planning is embedded within the University at the department level. Some of this activity is funded through a range of external partners, and transparently determining precisely which activities are delivered through university funds is difficult. However, the University is making a significant commitment towards improving the depth and range of activity, and the effective tracking, monitoring and evaluation of that activity. We are making a careful and conservative estimate that the costs of staff time and non-staff resource to develop the strategies for departmental outreach, plan the delivery of these activities, and to deliver the most targeted interventions will be £260,000.

We have recently expanded the support provided to those working on widening participation in academic departments through the creation of new posts in each of our academic colleges with the responsibility to lead on the delivery of widening participation activity in the college and ensure that the needs of disadvantaged students are at the heart of their marketing and student recruitment work.

8. Student Success

We are committed to supporting our students in achieving their full potential both during their academic studies and after graduation. We have invested significant resources in enhancing the personal development of our students.

8.1. Increased investment into academic support

Critical to student retention and success is strong support from the academic staff who lead and guide each student through their studies. Feedback through the National Student Survey evidences the importance of the personal tutor system, of good quality contact time, and of strong staff/student ratios, and we regard investment in this area as the key academic development at the University to support strong retention.

We will continue to earmark £400k from additional fee income to specifically increase staffing in this area, improve the staff/student ratio, increase contact time, and improve support, training and evaluation.

8.2. Greater Emphasis on Proactive Support

We are proud of record on retention but recognise that there is always more that we as a university can do to ensure that not only our students stay in higher education but that they thrive at Leicester. We are currently investigating innovative new measures to ensure new students effectively transition into higher education and that we can proactively identify those who need additional support. To achieve this we are currently investigating the most effective way of investing in:
Establishing a peer mentoring scheme, in which every first-year student is provided with a second-year student mentor, with communication and support to commence from confirmation in August each year. Our aim is to train around seven hundred mentors at the end of their first year and to utilise experienced student mentors as trainers and as authors of on-line mentoring and engagement resources.

Developing student engagement and retention software, which identifies a range of crucial engagement and interaction ‘events’ (including attendance monitoring but also extending to library use and other forms of engagement, all suited to different year levels) and flags those students who have become disengaged and therefore at an increased risk of academically underperforming or leaving the university.

8.3 Learning Development

In conjunction with academic departments and other corporate services, our Learning Development team provides a wide range of services to support and enhance both current and prospective students’ academic development. The core areas for which support is provided directly to students are:

- Academic writing (including guidance on understanding how to avoid plagiarism)
- Independent learning (critical thinking and self-organisation)
- Presentation skills (including the use of audio visual software)
- Dissertation writing (provided in close collaboration with Library Services)
- IT Skills (provided in close collaboration with IT Services)
- Numeracy (including resources to support students in analysing and presenting statistical data)

Support in these areas takes a variety of forms including:

- Mainstream curriculum-level support, designed and delivered in partnership with academic departments (e.g. collaboration in the design and delivery of relevant modules or assessment activities)
- Online, self-access resources provided in variety of formats and adaptable for discipline-specific contexts
- Individual study consultations to support students’ academic development
- Central, themed workshops, focusing, in particular, on writing development

As part of our commitment to student success we are currently in the process of creating a new comprehensive service that brings together the Learning Development team with those working across the university to embed best practice in course design and teaching practice. This new service will enable us to ensure that support for students’ learning development is fully embedded and integrated into mainstream learning and teaching practice. This will ensure a more strategic and sustainable approach to supporting students’ learning development in the future.
In addition, and over the next several years, we will be exploring, trialling and evaluating a range of developments in our first year programmes and student experience that aim to enhance effective induction, engagement, retention and academic success. While these will address the needs of all students, we are especially interested in developing the best possible balance between general approaches to the theme of ‘being a successful student’ and more tailored versions that highlight particular issues and challenges for ‘first in family’, ‘first generation’ and widening participation groups.

9. Progression

9.1. Employability

Through the University’s Employability Strategy our Careers Development Service has announced plans to enhance and expand the support provided to develop our students’ employability skills. In addition to providing employability-related content through specific events and online resources, the Careers Development Service will also provide:

- Additional internships to graduating students (both through offering internal placements through the Leicester Graduates Internship Programme and encouraging external placements through bursaries to employers and incentives to students).

- An expanded Leicester Award to provide more students with the opportunity to reflect on the transferable skills they develop through extra-curricular schemes and activities.

- Employability-related interventions through the curriculum (All undergraduate programs will provide at least one employability session per academic year).

- Post-graduation support for those struggling to secure graduate employment (a new specialist to be hired to provide information, advice and guidance to recent graduates).

9.2. Future OFFA-countable Expenditure

By 2016-17 we will be spending an additional £1,000,000 of OFFA-countable expenditure towards measures that enhance student success with a particular focus on employability with smaller increases on the 2012-3 baseline in 2014-5 (£133K) and 2015-6 (£500K). This will be either targeted support for students from underrepresented groups or an appropriate proportion of new investment in services accessible to all students. As with our commitment to funding for outreach and student retention, this is dependent on the strong off-quota recruitment that is required to enable the University to meet its financial planning targets.

9.3. Temporary Spending on Postgraduate Support Scheme and ‘Next Steps Careers Guidance’

We have designed our HEFCE Postgraduate Support Scheme to be OFFA-countable in its entirety, not just in the students it supports but in the problem it seeks to address. It is based on an analysis of our DLHE Survey respondents which showed that over 40% of those students who are economically inactive six months after finishing their degree came from a widening participation background. There was also an underrepresentation of students from low participation neighbourhoods and lower socio-economic households amongst those who reported that they were now enrolled on a postgraduate taught degree at the University of
Leicester. To combat both these issues we have used our scholarship to target those widening participation students at risk of being under or unemployed.

To achieve this we have invited all of our graduating students that meet the HEFCE PSS eligibility criteria and either come from a low-income household, low participation neighbourhood or socio-economically deprived neighbourhood to have a special ‘Next Steps Careers Guidance Appointment’ where they can discuss with our Careers Development Service what steps they can take to meet their career goals. This includes identifying those that would benefit from progressing onto postgraduate education and then supporting them in applying for the PSS. To run this system we have hired a new Careers Officer with a specific remit to work with this defined cohort of widening participation students. If this is successful we may look to continue the ‘Next Steps’ programme despite the HEFCE PSS having concluded after 2015-16.

Our approach to the HEFCE PSS will approve the graduate outcomes of our students from disadvantaged backgrounds, not just those who receive the scholarship but all those who receive careers guidance at this crucial stage. We believe that it is OFFA-countable as a progression activity akin to our Internship Promise. Therefore we have included our £275,000 contribution to the cost of providing the 55 scholarships in our OFFA-countable spending for 2015-16. This is new money which was not previously committed in our 2015-16 Access Agreement.

10. **Targets and Milestones**

10.1 **HEFCE WP PIs**

Targets have been set in the appendices which relate to a range of standard measures contained within the HEFCE performance indicators. These provide robust and consistent baseline data which can be compared across a number of years.

**Young entrants**

The University has a very representative intake and strong retention (as measured by WP entry and retention benchmarks). Our aim is to maintain this excellent performance, and in certain instances improve this performance further. However while we are confident that the plans we have in place will enable us to continue to improve our already strong performance against benchmark – but are cautious of over-committing on our absolute targets. We believe that when so many research-intensive universities fail to meet their benchmarks for recruitment that we can be proud that have consistently met them over such a long period.

In setting our targets we must draw OFFA’s attention to the fact that should the sector as a whole suffer significant changes as a result of the removal of Student Number Control or Curriculum Reform then these numbers will have to be revisited. We will keep this situation under review and alert OFFA if this becomes problematic.

**Mature entrants**

The University meets its current benchmarks in attracting full-time mature students (including those from low-participation neighbourhoods). We note that national mature student recruitment has significantly deteriorated since the raising of the cap on tuition fees and recent changes to Access to Higher Education. We therefore believe that continuing to meet these benchmarks is an ambitious and challenging target.
Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training

Our aim is to retain our excellent record for retention and for the diversity of our intake, to support improvements in the recruitment of mature entrants and to increase the intake of male students into our Primary PGCE. There are difficulties in setting specific numerical targets for the diversity of the intake, as the numbers are small and the intakes from key groups (BME, males in to primary teaching, and mature entrants) fluctuate significantly when measured in percentage terms. Never-the-less, we will monitor these closely from year to year, and report to OFFA the progress we are making with attracting students from these groups. In terms of retention, we aim to ensure that our retention remains between 90 and 96%.

10.2 Widening Participation Activities

Given the continuing uncertainty about the long-term impact of recent changes to the student finance and student number controls it is difficult to set interim targets. Our activity here at the University aims to support widening participation to this University and beyond. The University’s Performance Indicators provide the best assessment of our success in widening participation at this University. Measures of success for raising attainment and participation locally and regionally are dependent on successful collaboration with other HEIs and relevant stakeholders.

Our milestones outlined in Annex C therefore relate to a range of individual and collaborative initiatives that will support the delivery of our overarching aims to deliver widening participation.

Local collaboration

As lead institution of the REACH Partnership we will work with colleagues across Leicester and Leicestershire to raise aspirations amongst disadvantaged school and college students. Due to recently receiving funding due to becoming a HEFCE NNCO the partnership is currently reviewing its planned activity for 2015-16 and beyond. Therefore we are not in a position to put any specific milestones in this agreement concerning the partnership.

Realising Opportunities and Leicester Educational Access Programme

We at the University of Leicester support this target as part of our continuing commitment to Realising Opportunities. We will fulfil our institutional commitment to recruit our allocated student numbers to the programme, as set by the Realising Opportunities National Partnership, in support of achieving the overall progression target. To support this we will give all students who enter the University of Leicester having completed Realising Opportunities a £1,000 annual cash bursary (s. Section 4.1 above).

By 2016-17 we are also hoping to be recruiting 75 sixth form and college students onto the Leicester Enhanced Access Programme a year. Additionally, in 2016-17 we will welcome the first students into the University who have completed LEAP. We are aiming for 25% of all LEAP participants to enter the university. To encourage LEAP students to progress onto higher education we will offer them an enhanced scholarship package (s. Section 4.1 above).

Aspiration and attainment raising events

We aim to continue the aspiration and attainment raising activity programme offered by this University, with University offering at least 40 events to 11-16 year olds and a further 5 for primary school pupils. These activities and interventions will impact on over 2,300 pupils. We
will also welcome 200 students onto campus for a residential summer school. Our work with schools will also develop a stronger focus on information for teachers and parents, who are such crucial partners in the development and fulfilment of young learners’ aspirations.

For the first time we have also built in qualitative targets for our aspiration and attainment raising events. These will measure participant satisfaction with the activities and how effective we were at ensuring that those who attended were the ones most in need of the opportunity.

*Looked After Children*

We are proud of the diverse range of activities for Looked After Children we deliver in conjunction with Loughborough University and De Montfort University. We are committed to ensuring that we continue to make a profound difference on the lives of those who have experience of living in local authority care. Therefore we have included a new milestone that we will have at least 50 participants on activities focused at Looked After Children or those who support them every year.

*Students’ Union Outreach*

In another new milestone we have outlined ambitious plans to increase the number of widening participation activities run by the Students’ Union and the number of student volunteers they will train to go into schools.

### 11. Information provision to prospective students

The University has extensive plans for providing information to students about our fees, scholarships and other student support. We have in place market leading Customer Relationship Management processes, and are able to send direct, targeted information to the many thousands of students who have already enquired about undergraduate study with us.

We have created clear, unambiguous information on our web-site announcing the overarching principles of our proposals for fee levels and university scholarships and bursaries. This is supported by printed information for enquirers, visitors and schools, (targeted at parents and teachers as well as prospective students).

We will provide detailed guidance for students once this agreement is validated by OFFA and we will also make clear each student’s entitlement (in so far as they can be known) in our communication with applicants at the point an offer of a place is made. We are investigating ways to strengthen the pre-entry information we give to students to strengthen their understanding their rights and responsibilities as a Leicester student.

### 12. Equality and Diversity

12.1. Responsibilities under Equality Act 2010

Prior to the introduction of the Equality Act the University had already extended its proactive equalities activities to include the protected characteristics of age, religion and sexuality (in addition to disability, gender and race) through the adoption of a Single Equality Scheme. Following enactment and the introduction of revised general and specific public equality duties the University reviewed its scheme to produce a revised Equal Opportunities Policy which incorporates mechanisms to publish relevant equality data and agreed equality objectives embracing all protected characteristics in accordance with the Equality Act.
Equality data and agreed objectives have been published and will be reviewed on an annual basis. The new policy was formally agreed on 7th March 2012.

12.2 Targeting and Monitoring

We monitor the demographics of participants on centrally-organised outreach activities such as University Experience Days, Masterclasses and Summer Schools. While we do not set any targets for the proportion of participants that come from minorities we use this information to ensure that our events are inclusive to all children and young people irrespective of gender, ethnicity or disability.

In terms of targets and milestones for the agreement, there are difficulties in setting targets for individual ethnic groups. Numbers are small and fluctuate significantly from year to year, and setting appropriate targets whilst taking into account the characteristics and location of this University would be problematic. We have however included a target for disabled student recruitment based on our internal data.

12.3 Equality and Diversity Outreach

In addition to our general outreach (s. Section 6 for more details) we work explicitly with underrepresented groups for several projects; including running Black History Season events for local young people, being awarded the Athena Swan Bronze Award for our work to combat the underrepresentation of females in STEM and working to bring the arts to young people with disabilities through our Arts Centre’s Education & Outreach Programme. We have also worked closely with local colleges to facilitate mature entry into higher education, welcoming Access Students onto campus for a Study Skills Day and supporting academic research into their experience when entering higher education. In 2016/17 we will continue to run activities targeted at women and minorities. We will aim to make some links with local community events and hope to get student societies involved in local festivals such as the Leicester Caribbean Carnival and Leicester LGBT Pride as well as running tailored workshops during University events such as One World Week and Black History Month.

13. Collaboration with Students

13.1 Students’ Union Consultation on Access Agreement

The Students’ Union has been consulted extensively prior to the drafting of this document. The representatives were broadly supportive of the principles upon which the agreement was being drawn up, the overall approach to fees, scholarships and bursaries, and the plans for expenditure on outreach and retention. The Students’ Union Education Officer sits on the Widening Participation Working Group that has developed this document and has been involved in further consultations about the detail of these proposals.

13.2 On-going Engagement with Students’ Union

We are committed to involving students in our work to promote widening participation. A representative from the Students’ Union sits on the two key institutional forums in this area; School and College Services Advisory Group and Widening Participation Working Group. This ensures that student representatives are fully engaged in the dissemination of best practice and development of policy on issues related to widening participation. Furthermore University staff members and representatives from the Students’ Union have been playing an
active role in the NUS/NEON Working Group on ‘Engaging Students’ Unions in Widening Access’.

The Students’ Union Widening Participation and Outreach Coordinator, who is funded by the University, also works with the Students’ Union’s Sabbatical Officers to ensure they have the information about trends in widening participation to play a full and positive role in university and national discussions. This will come in the form of meetings and training sessions with the sabbaticals to ensure that their campaigns are well informed and they are kept at the forefront of any developments that may affect the course of their campaigns.
Appendix 1: HESA Performance Indicator Summary

The summary below is not a complete list of all performance indicators, but includes a good selection of Undergraduate full-time benchmarks to give a broad and fair indication of the University of Leicester’s success in delivering widening participation and retention across a mix of young and mature student groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Widening Participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: young full-time</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>88.8</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undergraduate entrants</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From state schools or colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3 method)</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Polar 2)</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: mature full-time</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>undergraduate entrants</td>
<td>(Polar 2)</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree entrants with no previous HE &amp; from low participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhoods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All undergraduate entrants with no previous HE &amp; from low participation</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhoods</td>
<td>(Polar 2)</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Benchmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completion Rates &amp; Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 3a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-continuation following year of entry: full-time first degree entrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young entrants no longer in HE</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature entrants no longer in HE</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>Not met</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All entrants no longer in HE</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 3b</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-continuation following year of entry: young full-time first degree entrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods no longer in HE</td>
<td>5.9 (Polar 2)</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young entrants from other neighbourhoods no longer in HE</td>
<td>4.5 (Polar 2)</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 3c</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-continuation following year of entry: mature full-time first degree entrants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With previous HE qualification and no longer in HE</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>Not met</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With no previous HE</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>Met</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
qualification and no longer in HE
Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference number</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T16a_01</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>91-96</td>
<td>2015-16 91-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_02</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2015-16 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_03</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>91-96</td>
<td>2015-16 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16a_04</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>91-96</td>
<td>2015-16 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around outreach and student success work (including collaborative work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access, student success and progression. These should be measurable outcomes-based targets and should focus on the number of beneficiaries reached by a particular activity programme or the number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the number of activities.

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Number</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T16b_02</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>91-96</td>
<td>2016-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_03</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>2016-17 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_04</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>91-96</td>
<td>2016-17 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16b_05</td>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>91-96</td>
<td>2016-17 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institution name: The University of Leicester
Institution UPRN: 10007792
| T16b_07 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of aspiration and attainment raising activities in/with 11-16 schools (such as University Experience Days, Goal Setting Workshops etc). | No Other please give details in Description column | 36 | 40 | 80 | 40 | 40 | 40 | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_08 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of student beneficiaries at aspiration and attainment raising activities in/with 11-16 schools (such as University Experience Days, Goal Setting Workshops etc). Number of student beneficiaries | No Other please give details in Description column | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | Baseline taken from an average of the number of participants over the past three years and represents a significant increase on our previous target of 1,000 student beneficiaries. |
| T16b_09 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | % of 11-16 aspiration and attainment activity participants (see above target) that are defined as disadvantaged by EMWRREP data (i.e. from LPN, NS-SEC 4-8, Disabled, IMD 40%及以上) | No Other please give details in Description column | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_10 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | % of University Experience participants that Agree to “The activity has increased my confidence about studying at university/higher education level” | No Other please give details in Description column | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_11 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | % of Goal Setting Workshop participants that Agree to “The activity has motivated me to do well with my current studies” | No Other please give details in Description column | 81% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | 80% | Baseline taken from an average of previous two years of activities. |
| T16b_12 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of Primary School Campus Visits | No Other please give details in Description column | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_13 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of Primary School beneficiaries | No Other please give details in Description column | 360 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | 400 | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_14 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | % of Primary School Campus Visit participants that agree that “The visit has motivated me to do well at school” | No Other please give details in Description column | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_15 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of student beneficiaries at aspiration and attainment raising activities in/with 11-16 schools (such as University Experience Days, Goal Setting Workshops etc). | No Other please give details in Description column | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | 85% | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_16 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of student beneficiaries at aspiration and attainment raising activities in/with 11-16 schools (such as University Experience Days, Goal Setting Workshops etc). | No Other please give details in Description column | 90% | 90% | 90% | 90% | 90% | 90% | Baseline taken from an average of previous three years of activities. |
| T16b_17 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of school activities organised/joined by the University of Leicester and Leicester Students’ Union | Yes 2015-16 | 15 | 30 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | A new milestone to set a clear target for our work with the Students’ Union. Several activities have already been run this year and we are confident that there will be run over the next few years. |
| T16b_18 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of volunteers trained by the Students’ Union to go into schools | Yes 2015-16 | 50 | 75 | 150 | 100 | 150 | 100 | A new milestone to set a clear target for our work with the Students’ Union. We are in the process of developing training and the procedures to recruit volunteers. |
| T16b_19 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of participants on the University of Leicester Enhanced Access Programme | No 2014-15 | 39 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | No pilot event we included fewer students than we hoped. We are hopeful we can rectify that for 2015-16. |
| T16b_20 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Percentage of LEAP participants progressing to the University of Leicester | No Other please give details in Description column | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | In the pilot year we included fewer students than we hoped. We are hopeful we can rectify that for 2015-16. |
| T16b_21 | Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column) | Number of volunteers trained by the Students’ Union to go into schools | No Other please give details in Description column | 50 | 75 | 150 | 100 | 150 | 100 | Activities delivered in partnership with De Montfort University and Loughborough University. |

Optional commentary on milestones.

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional supporting information as a separate Word/diff document.

*Please see Section 9 of our Access Agreement.*