



Access Agreement

Draft: for Approval by Office for Fair Access Summer 2009

Policy

The University's policy on fees and fair access is driven by its mission and situation:

- The University in Lincoln is a university of high quality, rooted in traditional values and structures, but addressing the contemporary agendas.
- Based in the centre of a historic cathedral city, the University also has campuses in Hull, Holbeach and Riseholme and serves a community and an extensive region which is somewhat geographically isolated.

The University will continue to set its Home/EU full-time first degree tuition fee level at the maximum prescribed fee (defined as the "higher amount" in the Higher Education Act 2004).

In 2008-9, the University is projected to invest approximately 23% of the additional income generated by the charging of the higher amount into the funding of means-tested bursaries and associated scholarships, with the remainder invested in outreach activity, improving the overall quality of the student experience and in funding the widening participation work which is now becoming embedded into the University's everyday activity.

The proportion of the additional income invested directly into the funding of means-tested bursaries and associated scholarships will, as widening participation activity becomes fully embedded into the University's everyday activity, be reduced to circa 9% in 2011-12. The estimated percentages for each year are as follows:

| | |
|---------|-----|
| 2009-10 | 17% |
| 2010-11 | 11% |
| 2011-12 | 9% |

Context

Despite its nominal location within the East Midlands, Lincolnshire is cut off from the main transport arteries of the country and appears, therefore, relatively remote. Family income, with little modern inward investment to the region, is relatively low, and family patterns remain largely traditional.

In addition to national recruitment, a substantial proportion of the University's student population come from north Nottinghamshire, south Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and the eastern and southern parts of Lincolnshire: these areas all have a progression to higher education rate of less than 29%, with some under 26%. Lincoln's own participation rate is under 21%.

The University of Lincoln has consistently outperformed against its HEFCE widening participation benchmarks. In addition, the 2006 Times Higher Education Widening Participation Initiative of the Year award was conferred on the University of Lincoln.

Means-Tested Bursary

The University is committed to providing a bursary for full-time students who are in receipt of a full Government Maintenance grant and liable to pay full-time tuition fees. This bursary will equate to 10% of the maximum full-time tuition fee, and for 2010-11 is expected to be £329. Payment will be in January to students who were attending the University as at 1st December in the same academic year.

Scholarships

The University is committed to the £1,500 per academic year “Blackburn Scholarship”, to which students previously in local authority care are entitled.

Outreach Activity

We are committed to widening participation in higher education as an integral part of our mainstream activities, and currently perform above national benchmarks for entrants:

- from lower income groups (35.4% against 30.1% nationally)
- from low participation neighbourhoods (15.6% against 10.2% nationally)
- who are “mature” entrants and complete their programme of study (85.4% against 82.9% nationally).

This performance stems from a wide range of outreach activities including:

- *Aimhigher and HEFCE Summer Schools*
A series of residential programmes held throughout the academic year, designed to give local and regional students in Years 10-12 a 3-day intense taster of university life. Students are selected from WP cohorts in our local schools and colleges and via a stringent application process, and the programme aims to offer able but low-aspiring students the chance to overcome some of the misconceptions and fears they might have about both themselves and higher education in general. In 2008/09, over 200 young beneficiaries took part in a Summer School at the University of Lincoln.
- *Aimhigher Taster Days*
Aimhigher Taster Days are short, high impact visits to the University and are designed to introduce higher education to younger learners, usually in Years 8 and 9, although older year groups may request participation in order to build on their existing, if limited, experience of universities too. The taster days form part of the University’s widening participation remit, and take the form of Bulletin or Higher Thinking Days, both of which aim to encourage students to develop their transferable skills in team-building, communication and logical thinking, as well as improving their self-esteem and aspirations to progress to further or higher education. In 2008/09, over 1450 local students took part in a taster day at the University.
- *Masterclasses*
The University of Lincoln’s Masterclass programme is designed to help raise local students’ aspirations and attainment, as well as introduce them to the teaching and learning methods used in higher education institutions. They cover both subject-specific topics, delivered by academics or experts in their field, but also encourage critical thinking, research and other key skills necessary for those entering higher education. Masterclasses are usually aimed at a broad range of local schools and colleges, usually with post-16 provision, and including those with WP-rich cohorts.
- *Other*

The University runs and participates in a diverse range of WP/Education Liaison programmes other than those outlined above, including Aimhigher Associates Scheme (from 2009/10), ACE Days, Boys into HE Days, Routes into Languages, the Cooperative Challenge, Aimhigher Science Week, Cool Chemistry, the Young Enterprise Challenge, the Street Law Scheme as well as the University of Lincoln's innovative Bridge Programme, which enables students to demonstrate their readiness for higher education in ways which supplement their formal academic qualifications. Many of these schemes are faculty-led and/or are collaborative efforts with Aimhigher partnerships, Connexions, EBLO, bioKneX, the Cooperative, as well as other regional HEIs.

We will drive forward our outreach agenda by continuing to work closely in partnership with key stakeholders, such as Aimhigher and Connexions, as well as with local schools, colleges and other HEIs, in order to:

1. raise the aspirations of local and regional students who may suffer from educational disadvantages, experience socio-economic difficulties, or face barriers to accessing higher education because of age, race, disability, gender, and so forth
2. help prepare local students for higher education through high impact or extended intervention activities both on campus and in schools, providing impartial and up to date advice on current matters relating to universities, finance, study skills, the UCAS application process, etc
3. develop transferrable skills in young learners which they will find invaluable should they progress to further or higher education, or pursue more vocational routes.

The University of Lincoln sees its programme of intervention activities as vital in ensuring that local students suffering from educational disadvantages have every opportunity to aspire to – and access – higher education, either at Lincoln or elsewhere and will set aside a total of £400k per annum for this extended outreach activity.

Information to Students

The University will ensure that clear information on tuition fees, scholarships and bursaries is available to students on the University website,

Milestones

Milestones will be measured against HEFCE's *Performance Indicators in Higher Education in the UK*. The University of Lincoln consistently outperforms the widening participation benchmarks and it is considered that it will be a significant achievement to maintain the relative position.

Milestone 1:

The University of Lincoln will seek to maintain its HEFCE Performance Indicators % of entrants from state schools at on or above the Benchmark. HEFCE Performance Indicator Table 1b will be used as a reference point.

Milestone 2:

The University of Lincoln will seek to maintain its HEFCE Performance Indicators % of entrants from socio-economic classes 4 to 7 at on or above the Benchmark. HEFCE Performance Indicator Table 1b will be used as a reference point.

Milestone 3:

The University of Lincoln will seek to maintain its HEFCE Performance Indicators % of entrants from low participation neighbourhoods at on or above the Benchmark. HEFCE Performance Indicator Table 1b will be used as a reference point.

Milestone 4:

The University of Lincoln will seek to maintain its HEFCE Performance Indicators % of mature entrants who continue or qualify at the University of Lincoln at on or above the benchmark. HEFCE Performance Indicator Table 3a will be used as a reference point.

Milestone 5:

The University of Lincoln will seek to maintain its HEFCE Performance Indicators % of entrants in receipt of Disabled Students Allowance at on or above the benchmark. HEFCE Performance Indicator Table 7 will be used as a reference point.

Monitoring

The University has established a range of key performance indicators to monitor performance against our strategic plan. As part of the strategic planning process we also monitor performance against the objectives and milestones set out in this access agreement, which is overseen by the University's Senior Management Team.