



**THE UNIVERSITY
of LIVERPOOL**

Access Agreement

This document is a revised version of the Access Agreement submitted by the University of Liverpool and accepted by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) in January 2005. It covers the period up to 2009, and has been amended in light of a new franchise arrangement - the Lifelong Learning Network - entered into by the University of Liverpool, and the development, in conjunction with Lancaster University, the University of Central Lancashire and St Martin's College, of a Medical and Dental Consortium. It continues to follow the sections set out in the document 'Producing Access Agreements: OFFA Guidance to Institutions' circulated to Institutions in November 2004.

Given the singular nature of the Medical and Dental Consortium's provision and ethos, it has been agreed that while sharing a common fees structure with the University of Liverpool, it should have a separate bursary scheme and enumerate its approach to access separately. Details of this are attached as appendix 1.

a. Fee Limits

- i. The University proposes to charge a fee of £3,000 for all eligible courses, except those identified below:-
 - The Foundation Year of specified four year courses as follows:-
 - > where this year of study is based at Carmel College, St Helens, Birkenhead Sixth Form College, or St John Rigby College, Wigan and forms a Foundation Year for the Lifelong Learning Network programmes.
 - > other Foundation Years, where this year of study is based at Carmel College, St Helens.

It is proposed that the fee for the Foundation Year only of these programmes should be £1,200.

 - The Placement Year of four year courses where students spend either a full year abroad or on placement in industry. It is proposed that the fee for the Placement Year only should be £600.
- ii. The University expects that these fee limits will rise with inflation on an annual basis, through regulations published by the government each year. Information on the level of fees will be given to applicants and students annually; further details are given in section d. of this agreement.
- iii. Students on the specific years of courses identified above, which are not subject to the £3,000 fee, will remain eligible for the University's bursaries and scholarships in the same way as all others.

b. Amounts of Additional Fee Income to be spent on Access Measures

The proportion of additional fee income to be spent on access measures will remain at the level set out in the initial access agreement (approximately one third).

c. Bursaries and other Financial Support for Students

- i. The University has identified the following target groups to receive bursaries and other financial support:-
 - Students from lower socio-economic groups currently under-represented in higher education;
 - Students from lower income households;
 - Students from the Merseyside sub-region;
 - Students in identified vocational subject areas who have excellent attainment.
- ii. The University's bursary arrangements will apply to all UK students provided that the appropriate means-testing information is available.
- iii. The University will provide for all students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant of £2,700 a further bursary of £1,300 per year to give a total annual maintenance package of £4,000.
- iv. In addition, the University will provide for all students in receipt of a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant a bursary of £1,000 per year.
- v. The University will continue to target bursary support on students resident in the Merseyside area through the existing John Lennon and Hillsborough memorial bursaries. These awards recognise the low level of participation in Higher Education in the Merseyside sub-region and are targeted towards students from lower-income families.
- vi. The University's bursaries and scholarships will be paid to eligible students in instalments, subject to satisfactory attendance. The University will use the assessments made available from the Student Loans Company to ensure that all eligible students receive the appropriate level of bursary. The University intends to sign up to the model bursary scheme as devised by the UUK/SCOP advisory group on bursary schemes.
- vii. The University will raise the bursary level each year to ensure that no gap is created between the fee charged and the support available, as result of inflation.
- viii. The University will provide a specific number of targeted Attainment Scholarships of £1,500 per year in particular Departments. These will be for a defined subset of courses within the following subject areas:-
 - Chemistry
 - Civil Engineering
 - Computer Sciences
 - Earth and Ocean Sciences
 - Electrical Engineering and Electronics
 - Materials Science and Engineering

- Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering
- Physics

The award of an Attainment Scholarship will depend on the achievement of defined entry criteria and continued success at a defined level on each year of the course.

d. Provision of Information to Students

- A new University publication – the Student Finance Information Booklet - will provide comprehensive information to prospective and existing students including details of fees and bursary, scholarship and other support available. This brochure will automatically be sent to all applicants to the University, and will be available via the University website as well as on request.
- The information made available will include detail on the nature and level of the University’s support for students, together with information on the costs of studying at the University, including indicative costs by subject area alongside related help and advice for students. In addition to this printed material the University has a dedicated team of student support staff who provide more in-depth advice on a case-by-case basis.

e. Outreach Work

- The University has been closely and substantially involved in outreach work for a significant time and is the lead institution in the Merseyside sub-region for Aimhigher. It is the intention to continue building on this experience and to focus particularly on increasing outreach in the Merseyside sub-region through provision of additional outreach support officers.
- The outreach work of the University encompasses multi-partner project work which helps to raise awareness of, and participation in, higher education in a generic way, together with more targeted activity to widen the pool of potentially-qualified applicants to the University. Widening participation activities follow a continuum:-
 - Promoting lifelong learning and introducing the culture of higher education to young people and adult returners, their families, teachers, supporters and communities. Much of this work is partnership-based and generic in nature;
 - Targeted activities for cohorts which have a realistic potential to progress to higher education and, in particular, to University of Liverpool provision;
 - Providing pre-entry support and transition activities in the first semester as appropriate; and ongoing support to ensure that students are retained within the institution and are enabled to move successfully into employment or further study at the end of their undergraduate course at the University.
- The University will develop further its outreach work through the work of dedicated posts within the outreach support team, and will continue to build on its work on immediate post-entry support for under-represented groups of students by enhancing the study skills support team and expanding its Peer Mentoring scheme. Our experience has demonstrated that these types of provision play a part in encouraging students from under-represented groups to apply to the University.

iv. The Outreach Support Officers are dedicated to supporting particular areas of the University's provision. They will work closely with academic Departments to identify target groups of potential students and develop outreach activities to ensure that each department encourages applications from across the range of potential students. These staff will work together with existing members of the Widening Participation and School and Colleges Relations Teams to develop targeted outreach activities and to build upon existing partnership-based outreach work. Departments will also be given additional support to ensure that they can provide appropriate academic support and advice to students from target groups. They will build on our substantial experience in areas such as:-

- Summer Schools
- Masterclasses
- Focussed Campus Visits
- Revision classes

The activities will develop further good practice and ensure that target groups are identified, supported, and encouraged to apply.

v. The additional Study Skills support will be targeted on the first semester of study, as experience indicates that this is when a student is most at risk. The University will concentrate its support on Study Skills Advisors and Peer Mentoring for target groups, through a variety of mechanisms including:-

- Departmental support and curriculum development
- Materials development
- One-to-one support
- Training for departmental staff and for student peers

vi. Participation in higher education in the Merseyside sub-region is low and the University particularly wishes to target its outreach activities on under-represented groups in the Greater Merseyside area, building on the activities of Aimhigher. Particular target groups include:-

- Young people from low participation neighbourhoods;
- Young people from black and minority ethnic groups;
- Young people from secondary schools with the greatest potential for increasing progression to higher education i.e. those schools with the biggest gap between 5 A-Cs at GCSE and participation in higher education;
- Young people and adult returners from further education colleges with high numbers of students from low participation neighbourhoods;
- Young people and adult returners from areas of low participation;
- Young people and adult returners with disabilities.

vii. The University's objective is to ensure that there is fair opportunity for students from these groups to benefit from the education it provides, subject to appropriate levels of attainment on entry. It has undertaken additional outreach work with identified partners in other areas of low participation and will therefore encourage and enhance these partnerships outside of the Greater Merseyside area.

- viii. The University has a wide range of support services for all students. These support services are extensively advertised to encourage applications to the University. Some of these support services are specific to under-represented groups. These include:-
- Pre-entry support and guidance for mature students;
 - Specialist help and support for students with disabilities;
 - An employer mentoring scheme for students who are at a disadvantage in the labour market, for example, black and minority ethnic students, students with disabilities, mature students, and those who are the first in their family to enter higher education;
 - Opportunities for accessing part-time work to fit in with the requirements of the degree course.
- ix. The University estimates that the reach of the activities will be as follows:-
- As a member of the Aimhigher Greater Merseyside partnership, the University will continue to work with all schools in Greater Merseyside on generic aspiration-raising activities;
 - The Schools and Colleges Relations Team will continue to work with 200 target schools across the UK, on a range of recruitment activities;
 - The Outreach Support Officers will work with a minimum of 75 schools, at least 25 of which will be in Greater Merseyside, on outreach activities with students in targeted groups who have the potential to progress on to the University of Liverpool.
- x. The University will underpin these activities with appropriate staff development and training at all levels, to ensure that potential and current students in the target groups are supported in an appropriate manner.
- xi. The areas identified above build on existing initiatives which have proved very successful in developing the University's outreach activities. It is proposed that the additional work to be undertaken will therefore enhance our provision rather than starting up entirely new initiatives. However it is envisaged that over time new activities will develop as more experience is gained.

f. Milestones

- i. The University already performs well in relation to its comparator Institutions and its 2002/03 HESA performance indicator benchmarks in the area of widening participation, particularly in respect of recruitment. It is the only English Russell Group institution to exceed its benchmarks in the proportion of students from state schools and from low participation neighbourhoods. It also has an excellent record in retention of students given the mix of students recruited. The University is committed to maintaining its current position but recognises that it will be difficult to enhance its performance further, given the situation of its main comparators.
- ii. The University will therefore use the performance indicators produced by HESA on an annual basis as milestones to assess progress against our objectives. In addition, once it becomes available, the University will break down the aggregate information which informs the indicators to subject level to support the development of a more differentiated approach to outreach dependent on performance by academic Department.

- iii. The University is also developing a series of internal recruitment, progression and completion indicators which identify performance based on ethnicity and region of domicile. Scrutiny of these internal performance indicators on an annual basis will give further complementary information in assessing progress against objectives in terms of our target groups in respect of Greater Merseyside-based students and black and minority ethnic students, and will provide more detailed information by academic Department.
- iv. The University will also use the numbers of students obtaining either full or partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant as a key indicator of participation from low income households. Using the 2006 entry figures as the baseline, an annual assessment will be made of numbers, broken down by academic Department and subject area, to ensure that the university maintains the baseline figure over the period covered by this Access Agreement.
- v. The University will undertake an annual review of its mechanisms for administration of its bursary and scholarship schemes and will ensure that this administration is effective, timely and efficient.
- vi. The University will continue to work with regional partners, as a member of the Greater Merseyside IAG partnership, to ensure that progression routes into the University for under-represented groups are transparent and equitable.
- vii. Appropriate training for all staff involved in outreach, recruitment and admissions procedures will be developed and delivered, to ensure that they can meet the needs of under-represented groups. The training will be reviewed annually and amended as required.

g. Institutional Monitoring Arrangements

- i. The University will use its existing monitoring arrangements to ensure that progress is being assessed appropriately. An annual assessment of progress will be made through the University's Learning and Teaching Committee, which has overall responsibility for this area, through Sub-Committees and Groups where necessary.
- ii. In addition regular monitoring points throughout the year will be identified whereby the outreach support team and study skills support team will assess progress at a Departmental level, informed by qualitative and quantitative management information.
- iii. This consideration will form the basis of the University's annual report to OFFA.



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Appendix 1

Cumbria & Lancashire Medical and Dental Consortium

HEFCE and the Department of Health have allocated medical and dental student numbers from 2006/07 onwards to a Consortium of the University of Liverpool, Lancaster University, the University of Central Lancashire and St Martin's College. Students will graduate with awards from the University of Liverpool, however, since each of the four HEIs has its own Access Agreement and bursary scheme (and they differ significantly) and the Consortium has a distinctive widening participation and local recruitment agenda, the Consortium Project Board has agreed that it would wish to have its own Consortium bursary scheme.

Lancaster University will take the local lead for medical education and the University of Central Lancashire will take the lead for dental education. The lead institutions will be responsible for the administration of the bursary scheme for the respective groups of students, under the auspices of the Consortium.

The consortium students fall into two distinct categories:

- i) Medical students on a five year MBChB programme;
- ii) Dental students on a Four Year Graduate Entry BDS programme.

The medical students are eligible to apply for an NHS bursary for Year 5 of their studies, and the NHS will pay their fees for that year. The dental students are eligible to apply for an NHS bursary in Years 2, 3 and 4, and the NHS will pay their fees for those years of study; however, the dental students are not entitled to a Higher Education Maintenance Grant or an NHS bursary or to a fee loan in Year 1 of their studies. The financial packages available for the two categories of student and consequently their support needs, differ significantly therefore.

a. Fee Limits

- i. The Consortium proposes to charge a fee of £3,000 for these courses, in line with the University of Liverpool and the other partners in the Consortium.
- ii. The Consortium expects that this fee limit will rise with inflation on an annual basis, through regulations published by the government each year. Information on the level of fees will be given to applicants and students annually.

b. Amount of Additional Fee Income to be spent on Access Measures

- i. The Consortium has a commitment to diversity in the student population. It has determined that the proportion of additional fee income to the Consortium to be spent on access measures will be approximately 40%.

c. Bursaries and other Financial Support for Students

- i. The Consortium has identified the following target groups to receive bursaries and other financial support:-
 - Students from the Cumbria and Lancashire area from lower socio-economic groups currently under-represented in higher education;
 - Students from lower income households;
 - Students from lower income households with child dependants, particularly in the light of their need as students on clinical programmes to attend irregularly timetabled clinical placements, at unsocial hours.
- ii. In addition, due to the extent of outreach education in the curricula, each student will receive a laptop computer to ensure that they are able to access Consortium electronic facilities regardless of their location.
- iii. The Consortium's bursary arrangements will apply to all UK students provided that the appropriate means-testing information is available.
- iv. The Consortium will provide for all medical students in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant a bursary of £1,300 per year.
- v. The Consortium will provide each medical student in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant with the sum of £500 for each dependant child under 5, and £300 for each child aged between 5 and 11.
- vi. The Consortium will provide each medical student in receipt of the full Higher Education Maintenance Grant who enters the course from a designated progression route with a further £400 bursary. Appropriate progression routes offered in the Cumbria and Lancashire area will be designated by the Consortium, and this information publicised.
- vii. The Consortium will provide for all medical students in receipt of a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant a bursary of £500 per year.
- viii. The Consortium will provide each medical student in receipt of a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant with the sum of £250 for each dependant child under 5, and £200 for each child aged between 5 and 11.
- ix. The Consortium will provide each medical student in receipt of a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant who enters the course from a designated progression route with a further £250 bursary.
- x. The Consortium will provide for all Year 1 dental students with a gross residual household income that would entitle them, if they were eligible to apply, to a full Higher Education Maintenance Grant, a bursary of £2,000 for that year.

- xi. The Consortium will provide all Year 1 dental students with a gross residual household income that would entitle them, if they were eligible to apply, to a full Higher Education Maintenance Grant, with the sum of £500 for each dependant child under 5, and £300 for each child aged between 5 and 11.
- xii. The Consortium will provide for all Year 1 dental students with a gross residual household income that would entitle them, if they were eligible to apply, to a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant, a bursary of £1,000 for that year.
- xiii. The Consortium will provide all Year 1 dental students with a gross residual household income that would entitle them, if they were eligible to apply, to a partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant, with the sum of £250 for each dependant child under 5, and £200 for each child aged between 5 and 11.
- xiv. Students will also be eligible to apply for support from a hardship fund maintained by their lead institution.
- xv. The Consortium's bursaries will be paid to eligible students in instalments, subject to satisfactory attendance. The Consortium will use the assessments made available from the Student Loans Company to ensure that all eligible students receive the appropriate level of bursary.
- xvi. The Consortium will raise the bursary level as appropriate to ensure that no gap is created between the fee charged and the support available, as a result of inflation.

d. Provision of Information to Students

- i. Information about the Consortium's support for students will be provided in the course leaflets, and on the Consortium website and the websites of the lead institutions for the programmes.

e. Outreach Work

- i. The outreach work undertaken by the partner institutions in the Consortium is outlined in their individual Access Agreements.
- ii. Work that has been undertaken so far that is specific to the Consortium includes the introduction by Lancaster University, in collaboration with the University of Liverpool, of a Pre-Medical Studies programme designed to provide an entry route to medicine for intellectually able and appropriately committed students who would not normally be offered a place on a medical degree because of their choice of A level subjects or circumstances that have affected their performance. As part of the programme, students attend a programme offered by the local Hospitals Trust designed to enable them to gain knowledge and experience of careers in the NHS. Successful completion of the programme also enables direct second year entry to a number of degrees in the biosciences at Lancaster.
- iii. St Martin's College offers an Access programme for Health and Medical Sciences, which provides places on the medical degree for a specified number of students who are successful at interview and perform at the designated level on the programme.

- iv. Direct outreach work is less appropriate for the Graduate Entry dental programme. However, since applications are encouraged from graduates in the North West, Cumbria and Lancashire, the population of graduate applicants is fed by the outreach work of the local HEIs.

f. Milestones

- i. The Consortium will use the numbers of students obtaining either full or partial Higher Education Maintenance Grants, or those with a gross residual household income that would entitle them, if they were eligible to apply, to a full or partial Higher Education Maintenance Grant, as a key indicator of participation from low income households.
- ii. The number of students from low income households with child dependants will be an indicator of the Consortium's ability to attract mature students.
- iii. The number of students entering from designated progression routes will be an indicator of the Consortium's ability to attract students from non-traditional routes.

g. Consortium monitoring

- i. A report on the bursaries and student support provided to Consortium students will form part of the annual report to the Consortium Management Board. An annual assessment of the bursary scheme will be made by the Consortium Executive Committee.
- ii. Monitoring of the Consortium will also be incorporated into the University of Liverpool's annual report to OFFA.