

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH ACCESS AGREEMENT

The University of Portsmouth is committed to ensuring that students who can benefit from courses at the University are not prevented from attending because they face financial hardship.

This Access Agreement sets out:

1. The University's policy on tuition fees for full-time home/EU undergraduates.
2. The bursaries and access to learning funds which are available to students enrolled on University courses.
3. The approach of the University to making available information on financial support to prospective and current students.
4. A projected financial analysis, of student fee income and expenditure on bursaries, outreach activities and enhanced financial advice.
5. The outreach and support activities undertaken by the University which focus on widening participation and access
6. The milestones by which the University will judge its performance, particularly in outreach activities, and the ways in which that performance will be monitored.

1 UNIVERSITY FEE POLICY

From the academic year 2006/7, the University commenced charging all new home and EU students on i) its full-time undergraduate programmes and ii) its full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education a fee of £3,000 per year, which is to be uplifted by the inflation index published by the government each year. For 2007/08 this fees has been increased by 2.33% to £3,070 and annual inflation increases announced by the Government in future years will be similarly applied to fees. The exceptions are those programmes with sandwich placement years or approved years of study abroad which for the year away the fee will be £610. The £3,070 fee limit will also apply to students studying on University of Portsmouth undergraduate programmes franchised to our partners who are currently Chichester College, South Downs College and Flagship Training Ltd (HMS Collingwood).

2 BURSARIES AND OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

2.1 Income Based

We shall adopt a system of bursaries through which students coming from households in the lower range of incomes will receive an additional grant from the University for academic year 2007/08, as follows:

- For students who's family residual income is £17,910 or below a bursary of £820. This includes the statutory £305 bursary.
- For students who's family residual income is between £17,910 and £25,500 in 2007 a bursary of £520.

In future years this income threshold will be raised by at least the levels of increase in state support. For PGCE students, this support will be in addition to any other bursary support to which they may be entitled. The level of support available to students according to various household incomes is shown in Table 1.

Family income bands	Government grant	University bursary	Total financial support (examples within scales)
Up to and including £17,910	£2,765	£820	£3,585
£17,911 to £25,500	Sliding scale from £2,765 down to circa £1,500	£520	£3,285 (£17,911 income) £2,604 (£22,000 income) £2,020 (£25,500 income)
£25,501 to £38,330	Sliding scale from circa £1,500 down to £50	Not eligible	£1,500 (£25,500 income) £1,200 (£26,500 income) £1,042 (£28,000 income) £831 (£30,000 income) £50 (£37,425 income)

For income between £17,911 and £27,120 the grant is reduced by £1 for every 36 by which family income exceeds £17,910.

For income between £27,121 and £38,330 the grant is reduced by £1 for every £9.50 by which family income exceeds £27,120.

Table 1 Support for students related to examples of household income (assessed by the Student Loans Company)

2.2 Local students

For students who enter the University in 2007/08 from our seven closest further education colleges, we will provide a bursary of £300. The colleges are Portsmouth Sixth Form College, Highbury College, South Downs College, Havant College, St Vincent's College, Fareham College and the Isle of Wight College.

2.3 The five-year cost projections of the above proposals are set out below in Table 2:

	2006/07 Year 1 £,000	2007/08 Year 2 £,000	2008/09 Year 3 £,000	2009/10 Year 4 (assumed steady state) £,000	2010/11 Year 5 £,000
University bursary scheme	689	1,817	2,782	2,895	2,895
Extension to hardship funds	400	500	750	750	750
Total	1,089	2,317	3,532	3,645	3,645

Table 2 Cost projections of proposed bursary scheme

- 2.3 In addition, the University's has established its own hardship fund to enable financial assistance to be given to those who demonstrate need during their period of registration at the University. We anticipate that those groups of students who narrowly fail to qualify for either bursary are most likely to face financial pressures, and the hardship fund provides a flexible way of considering their needs. This addition to the access fund will be £500k in 2007, rising to £750k when all relevant students are paying the new tuition fees. Part-time students are also eligible to benefit from this fund on demonstration of need.
- 2.4 Students on franchised full-time undergraduate courses offered by our Further Education College partners will be offered the same level of support as students studying in the University.
- 2.5 The University applies this bursary policy to all students ordinarily resident in the UK and Northern Ireland. Students from other EU states will however, only be eligible to claim the University's £520 additional bursary, as detailed in paragraph 2.1 above. They will not be eligible for the £305 statutory bursary unless there are changes in legislation advised to us.

3 FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

3.1 Providing Information

Students who are considering entering HE must be aware at an early stage of the financial commitment involved and of ways of planning ahead. We consistently aim therefore to ensure that prospective students and their parents have good, reliable and current information on all financial aspects of studying successfully at this level. The University already provides information on finance to students and their advisors through all its education liaison and outreach activities, including the *UP for It* programme, aimed at year 7 to 11 pupils.

The means of communication which we use are varied and include:

- The University undergraduate prospectus
- Relationship campaign including financial supplement issued to all applicants
- Money matters postcard, including directions to specially created web site, to all applicants
- Further information on parents portal with specific financial advice sent to all applicants: www.port.ac.uk/parents
- Pre applicant advice and guidance delivered at local FE colleges
- Confused clinic run at annual UCAS fair
- Specialist finance clinics and talks at all University preview days
- The *Up for It* prospectus for Years 7 to 11 in schools and colleges
- Workshop sessions and activities including the budget game run by the *Up for It* team at, for example, Careers fairs, taster days and within local schools and colleges for years 7 to 13

- Specialist leaflets for distribution at higher education fairs
- Regular presentations at financial workshops in local schools and colleges

3.2 Information on total costs of tuition

We will ensure that, prior to commencing any course, all students are made fully aware of the tuition and any other academic costs which they will need to incur in order successfully to complete their chosen course.

3.3 Student Finance Centre

The staff of the University's Student Finance Centre provide expert support and guidance to all students and have responsibility for administering the University's own and other hardship funds, including facilities to provide short-term loans. This means students can receive immediate reassurance of the financial support that they are to receive.

The University has expanded this service, including increasing the number of staff employed to ensure that increased levels of support can be offered to students and potential students. Financial information and guidance has been further developed and promoted both internally and externally to the University. A fees and bursaries hotline has been established and widely advertised. Events are run to assist students already enrolled on courses. These include budgeting programs and workgroups for students with difficulties managing their resources who require 'in depth' financial support and/or debt counselling. Preparing for life after graduation and continuing to manage debts is also included within the support offered. The money doctors service has recently been launched which aims to enable students to take responsibility and control for their own financial well-being and feel confident about dealing with their finances.

Further developments planned for 2007/08 include:

- A redesigned website to better reflect the needs of current and prospective students.
- An interactive support calculator to enable parents and students to input financial information relating to their own circumstances to provide a clearer, indicative picture of the funding and support they can expect.
- Interactive budget planner.

The dedicated University website (www.port.ac.uk/money) is an important source of information. It is updated regularly with changes to financial support or assistance available to students.

4 EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

The table below (Table 3) outlines the assumptions concerning the amount of fee income to be spent on access measures each year, for the first five years of this access agreement. The University understands that both fees and therefore expenditures contained within the agreement are subject to annual inflation at a rate determined

nationally. However, for ease of comparison all figures post 2007/08 are at 2007/08 prices.

	2006/07 Year 1 £,000	2007/08 Year 2 £,000	2008/09 Year 3 £,000	2009/10 Year 4 £,000	2010/11 Year 5 £,000
Total additional fee income	6,570	12,826	18,937	19,765	19,765
Bursaries	1,089	2,317	3,532	3,645	3,645
Additional outreach work	559	587	587	587	587
Enhanced financial guidance and information	240	252	252	252	252
Enhanced post-entry support	230	242	242	242	242
Total expenditure	2,118	3,398	4,613	4,726	4,726
Expenditure as % of fees	32	26	24	24	24

Table 3 Expenditure on additional access measures as a percentage of total fee income, 2006-2011

Notes:

- 1 The impact of students taking a gap year in 2005/06 is factored into the first 3 years' income
- 2 Expenditure on access measures represents a greater proportion of income in the early years, because many of the access measures comprise outreach work so do not increase proportionately with fee-paying student numbers.
- 4 The expenditure in the table is in addition to pre-existing directly identified expenditure on outreach work costs, costing in the order of £500,000. This focuses purely on identified costs within the Education Liaison Team and associated activities and takes no account of wide range of activities embedded either within academic departments or support departments such as the Student Finance Centre.

5 OUTREACH AND POST-ENTRY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

The University embeds its commitment to widening participation and raising aspiration within all its schools' liaison and other outreach work.

5.1 Education Liaison

The University has a dedicated education liaison and WP team which employs ten people. The team visits schools and colleges to inform potential students of the benefits of higher Education and to advise them on their choice of course. The team concentrates on pre-entry advice and guidance and general promotional activity to those aged over 16, but also offers support to those from key stage 2 and upwards.

5.2 The *UP for It* Initiative

In 2001, the University established a programme to reach out to young people in years 7 to 11. *UP for It* was designed to raise the level of interest amongst young people, particularly those living in the local region, in staying in full-time education and eventually progressing to higher education (HE). The design of *UP for It* activities recognises that early disengagement occurs in groups traditionally under-represented in HE. The University's outreach activities support teachers in providing inspirational activities and developing an understanding of HE from year 7 onwards. *UP for It* works through schools and also communicates directly through its club membership. Members receive magazines, access to a dedicated website and invitations to events. *It's Up 2u* – a guide to choosing options for years 7 – 9 was launched in the autumn of 2006. Accompanying lesson plans and extension activities are delivered in all local secondary schools.

Membership of *Up for It* is open to all young people in the target age group. However, many of these outreach activities are targeted at 11-16 schools in Portsmouth and its sub-region which have below average educational attainment measured by GSCE/GNVQ results.

We have developed specific streams of *UP for It* activity to target particular areas of need, and to take advantage of subjects where the University can provide clear added value to schools. Such programmes include *UP for Enterprise*, *UP for Sport*, *UP for Maths*, *up for Science* and *Up for Health, including Up fo rTeeth*. The University works in partnership with other relevant organisations in the development of these programmes. 10,000 young people have already participated in the *Up for It* programme, a target originally not expected to be achieved until 2008.

UP for It won national recognition with a HEIST Gold Award for Widening Participation in 2002. It was also nominated for the Times Higher Award for WP in 2005. Its membership was the subject of a research report into aspirations and influences launched at the House of Commons in 2006.

5.2.1 Expanding a successful programme

- *UP for It Juniors* is running in all local primary schools and has been expanded to a range of primary schools across the wider Hampshire region.
- The expansion of the *UP for It* scheme that will be funded from 2007 will be targeted at:
 - schools with lower than average progression rates to HE (in Hampshire and Isle of Wight)
 - primary schools that feed our local A and B list 11-16 schools as defined by AimHigher
 - improving pre-entry advice and guidance for individual *UP for It* members and former members
 - Up for the future – using new media to reach 16-18 year olds in FE colleges

5.3 AimHigher

The sub-regional AimHigher programme involves a consortium of local HEIs in Hampshire and its work is complemented by *Up for It*. A summary of the activities of the AimHigher partnership, which has been agreed by all its HEI members, is at Annex A.

5.4 Supporting students with disabilities

We are committed to those students with a disability entering higher education and who may therefore require additional support. Not only do we welcome these students to the University but we also wish to see them study successfully for their chosen qualification. We have established therefore an Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre to assess pre-entry need and offer post-entry support. We envisage increasing the support offered through this centre as more students who require such assistance are attracted to study at the University.

6 PERFORMANCE MILESTONES AND MONITORING THE AGREEMENT

The University will measure its performance in terms of encouraging access by reference to the following parameters:

6.1 The number of students in receipt of bursaries

We will adopt as a minimum target 30% of eligible students to be in receipt of bursaries, using the income data provided by the SLC to determine this baseline.

6.2 Widening participation and retention milestones

Over the life of the agreement, we will aim:

- to exceed HEFCE's annually published location-adjusted benchmark for young full-time undergraduate entrants from NS-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7 and to achieve the location-adjusted benchmark for low participation neighbourhoods
- to continue to exceed HEFCE's annually published location-adjusted benchmark for mature full-time undergraduate entrants with no previous experience of HE and from low participation neighbourhoods
- to continue to have a lower than benchmark non-continuation rate following year of entry for young full-time first degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods and for mature full-time first degree entrants

6.3 Monitoring the Access Agreement

The ultimate responsibility for monitoring the University's access agreement will lie with the Board of Governors. The annual monitoring of access agreement, including performance against the agreed targets will be exercised by the Board through its Student Academic and General Affairs Committee, which will receive an annual report on the Access Agreement. A remedial action plan will be required in the event of any shortfall in performance against the agreed targets.

SUMMARY

The University is already showing considerable commitment to raising aspirations in young people, both in the Portsmouth city region and beyond. It extends that commitment to ensure that the changed financial basis of higher education does not frustrate their ambition to undertake higher education. The University firmly believes that the measures set out above will ensure that the University's record of encouraging wider participation will be maintained.

ANNEX A

Collaboration between the University of Portsmouth, the University of Southampton, Southampton Solent University and the University of Winchester to promote access to higher education

The current Aimhigher partnership, led from the University of Winchester on behalf of a wide partnership including all HEIs in the Hants/Isle of Wight sub-region, is only one manifestation of a strongly collaborative approach to outreach activities amongst the HEIs concerned.

In 1996, the University of Southampton led a consortium including Southampton Solent University (then Southampton Institute), the University of Winchester (then King Alfred's College), the University of Portsmouth and the University of Chichester (then Chichester Institute of HE) to create the Wessex and Solent Partnership for Widening Participation, the aim of which was to promote access from disadvantaged and under-represented groups to higher education. Initial work with schools and colleges was focused on developing facilities and systems to support disabled students. From 1999 this was extended to encompass a range of activities including collaborative outreach, on-campus aspiration raising and access arrangements. Complementing this, the University of Portsmouth led a network with partner FE and Sixth Form Colleges in Portsmouth and the surrounding area aimed at improving progression of under-represented groups.

In 2002 the introduction of the HEFCE/LSC-funded *Partnerships for Progression* (P4P) provided an opportunity to build upon this history of collaboration, to strengthen the role of Further Education Colleges and schools and to work more closely with new partners, such as the OU, the local LEAs, Connexions and the local Learning and Skills Council. This has resulted in a considerable expansion of collaborative activities to promote access. The recent integration of P4P with Education Action Zone/Excellence Challenge initiatives to form Aimhigher (Hampshire & Isle of Wight), together with a significant uplift in funding, has further enhanced the partners' capacity to promote measures to increase and widen participation in higher education.

Currently, there are eight Aimhigher Action Programmes, each with a number of collaborative projects and activities:

1. **On-campus aspiration-raising activities** (summer schools and taster days). Led from the University of Southampton, this has led to better targeted summer schools in each of the HEIs, with substantially increased participation from young people in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. In addition Aimhigher regionally provides for summer schools with regionally based targeting in each of the HEIs, with matched funding from the ESF.
2. **Off-campus aspiration-raising activities** (outreach in schools and the community). Led from the University of Portsmouth and involving all partner HEIs, includes taster days, a student ambassador scheme and a range of community projects aimed at raising aspirations for HE.
3. **Admission and progression routes**. This action programme, led from Southampton Solent University, involves putting together cross-sector curriculum development teams to identify ways of facilitating admission and progression in a range of vocational

subjects where there are particular progression issues and/or skills shortages. A common compact framework is under development as part of this initiative.

4. **Staff development.** Led by the core Aimhigher team at the University of Winchester, this involves promoting staff awareness of the challenges for learners in the changing school, FE and HE environment.
5. **Information, advice and guidance.** Led by Connexions, this involves developing common guidance materials, including teachers' packs and web sites, to enhance the understanding of young people and adults of the benefits and opportunities of progression to HE.
6. **Mapping, tracking, monitoring and evaluation.** Led by the core Aimhigher team, this involves collaborative targeting, monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of Aimhigher activities.
7. **Work-related and work-based learning.** Led by the Education Business Partnership, this involves raising aspirations and attainment through learning programmes linked with employers.
8. **Themed events championing vocational routes.** Developments of new projects to raise attainment and progressions in key vocational subject areas: Construction, Marine Technology, ICT, Business and Finance and Mathematics.
9. **Improving recruitment, retention and ongoing support at college.** Grants awarded to 8 colleges within Hampshire and Isle of Wight to aid pupils from areas of high social deprivation using buddying, texting and learning mentors.

The collaborative widening participation activities of the HEIs in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, especially those under Action Programme 3 above, provide a strong basis for the new Lifelong Learning Network funded by HEFCE from 2006 onwards. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Lifelong Learning Network involved the Universities of Portsmouth, Southampton, Southampton Solent and Winchester, plus the University of Chichester in relation to the Isle of Wight. These Universities, along with FE partners, will be working together to promote opportunities for people with a wide range of backgrounds and qualifications to progress successfully into HE.