

# **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 its full-time undergraduate programmes and 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 fee has been increased by 2.33% to £3,070. For 2008/09 this will be increased to £3,145 and, for later years, annual inflation increases announced by the Government will be similarly applied to fees. The £3,070 for 2007/08 and £3,145 for 2008/09 fee limits will also apply to students studying on University of Portsmouth undergraduate programmes franchised to our partners: currently Chichester College, South Downs College and Flagship Training Ltd (HMS Collingwood).

The exceptions to this general policy are those programmes with sandwich placement years or approved years of study abroad. For the year away the fee will be £610 in 2007/08 and a further inflationary increase to this fee in 2008/09.

## **2 BURSARIES AND OTHER FORMS OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

### **2.1 Income Based**

We have a system of bursaries through which students coming from households in the lower range of incomes will receive an additional, non-repayable bursary from the University for academic year 2007/08:

- For students whose family residual income is £17,910 or below the bursary is £820. This includes the statutory £305 bursary.
- For students whose family residual income is between £17,910 and £25,500 the bursary is £520.

In 2008/09 the bursary offer is being extended to reflect changes to the state support also offered to students. Bursaries will be offered as follows:

- For students whose family residual income is £25,000 or below the bursary will be £900. This includes the minimum bursary (ie the difference between the maximum grant and the fee charged), payable to all students entitled to full state support.
- For students whose family residual income is between £25,001 and £32,000 the bursary will be £600.

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.

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

TABLE 1a: 2007/08: confirmed figures

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)

TABLE 1b 2008/09: Estimated scales of household incomes that will apply to students who started courses in 2006/07 and 2007/08

Family Income bands	Government Grant	University bursary	Total Financial Support
Up to and including £18,360	£2,835	£900	£3,735
£18,361 to £25,000	£2,834 - £1,729	£900	£3,734 - £2,629

£25,001 to £32,000	£1,728 – circa £815	£600	£2,328 – circa £1,415
£32,001 to £39,305	Sliding scale from circa £814 down to £50	Not eligible	£814 - £50 (min grant)

Table 1c: New students in 2008/09

Family income bands	Government grant	University bursary	Total financial support (examples within scales)
Up to and including £25,000	£2,835	£900	£3,735
£25,001 to £32,000	Sliding scale from £2,834 down to circa £1,500	£600	£3,434 (£25,001 income) £2,100 (£32,000 income)
£32,001 to £60,000	Sliding scale from circa £1,499 down to £100	Not eligible	£1,499 (£32,001 income) £100 (£60,000 income)

The distinction in state support between new and continuing students is a result of changing government policy.

For 2007/08, for income between £17,911 and £27,120 the government grant is reduced by £1 for every £6 by which family income exceeds £17,910.

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

For 2008/09 for income between £18,361 and £27,810 the government grant is reduced by £1 for every £6 by which family income exceeds £18,361.

For income between £27,811 and £39,305 the government grant is reduced by £1 for every £9.50 by which family income exceeds £27,810.

## 2.2 Local students

For students who enter the University in 2007/08 from our seven closest Further Education colleges, we will provide an additional bursary of £300 per annum. 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. This offer will be extended to students progressing from the University's own FE courses. This bursary will continue for students entering the University in 2008/09.

## 2.3 In addition, the University 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 £500,000 a year. Part-time students are also eligible to benefit from this fund on demonstration of need.

2.4 The University has established a Care Leavers-Foyer-Sheltered Accommodation Bursary. This will be £1,500 per annum in 2007/08.

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

**Table 2 Cost projections of proposed bursary scheme**

	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	823	1,895	3,196	3,196	3,196
Extension to hardship funds	194	500	500	500	500
Local bursary	0	105	210	315	315
Total	1,017	2,500	3,906	4,011	4,011

2.6 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.

2.7 The University applies this bursary policy to all students ordinarily resident in the UK and Northern Ireland on HEFCE funded courses, paying the £3,070 fee in 2007/08 and £3,145 fee in 2008/09. Students from other EU states will only be eligible to claim the £520 additional bursary in 2007/08 and £600 in 2008/09, as detailed in paragraph 2.1 above, if they are on HEFCE funded courses. They will not be eligible for the full amount 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 to ensure that prospective students and their parents have clear, 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 pupils in years 5 to 13.

The means of communication which we use include:

- The undergraduate prospectus
- The Student Finance Centre webpages with distinct sites for prospective and current students [www.port.ac.uk/money](http://www.port.ac.uk/money). This includes an interactive support calculator,

budget planner and expenditure tracker 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.

- Pre applicant advice and guidance delivered at local FE colleges
- “Confused” clinic run at annual UCAS fair in Portsmouth
- Specialist finance clinics and talks at all University preview days
- The Guide for Parents
- Bursary Postcards
- Care Leavers/Foyer/Sheltered Accommodation leaflet and focus groups
- “Its UP 2 U”, a mini prospectus and options guide for years 7 to 11 in schools and colleges
- Workshop sessions and activities including the budget game run at, for example, Careers fairs, taster days and within local schools and colleges for years 7 to 13
- Regular presentations at financial workshops in local schools and colleges
- Promotion and inclusion in the Aimhigher Local Bursaries Guide.

### **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 internally and externally to the University. A fees and bursaries hotline has been established and widely advertised. Student and staff inductions are carried out on a regular basis. 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, which we launched in 2006/07, is aimed at continuing to develop and improve our students financial capability through events and financial surgeries. Students participating in the service are empowered to take responsibility and control for their own financial well-being and feel confident about dealing with their finances. We seek regular feedback on the services of the Centre and this can lead to changes that refine and improve the support offered to students.

Specific developments planned for 2007/08 and 2008/09 include:

- Introduction of a text messaging system to remind students of their workshop/surgery appointment, fund award payment dates and event and news items
- On line learning resources for all students on Debt Counselling and the processes required to manage this effectively
- Introduction of the Money Doctors elective for students, incorporated within the curriculum. This will train and educate students in first level financial guidance and debt counselling with the opportunity for peer work and possible placement work within the Student Finance Centre. This will incorporate on line learning resources.
- To establish compact agreements for Care Leavers to guarantee accommodation and rent contributions for both term time and during summer vacations.
- Specific promotional material for the local college bursaries

The University was nominated for the Times Higher award for Outstanding Student Support Package in 2007.

#### 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.

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

	<b>2006/07 Year 1 £,000</b>	<b>2007/08 Year 2 £,000</b>	<b>2008/09 Year 3 £,000</b>	<b>2009/10 Year 4 £,000</b>	<b>2010/11 Year 5 £,000</b>
Total additional fee income	6,470	13,064	20,389	21,125	21,125
Bursaries	1,017	2,500	3,906	4,011	4,011
Additional outreach work	559	636	685	685	685
Enhanced financial guidance and information	316	491	547	547	547
Enhanced post-entry support	230	242	242	242	242
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>2,122</b>	<b>3,869</b>	<b>5,380</b>	<b>5,485</b>	<b>5,485</b>
<b>Expenditure as % of fees</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>

**Notes:**

- 1 The impact of students taking a gap year in 2005/06 is factored into the first 3 years' income
- 2 The expenditure in the table is in addition to pre-existing directly identified expenditure on outreach work, 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 other support departments.

## **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 raise aspirations and increase attainment.

### **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 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 mini-prospectus and options guide for years 7 – 11 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 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. Currently programmes are targeted around the STEM agenda. Languages, healthy schools and Every Child Matters. The University works in partnership with other relevant organisations in the development of these programmes. 14,000 young people have already participated in the *Up for It* programme, significantly exceeding original targets.

*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.

### **Expanding a successful programme**

The continued expansion of the *UP for It* scheme is targeted at offering an exciting range of activities to change perceptions and promote higher education to pupils from all backgrounds.

- Improving aspirations in schools with lower than average progression rates to HE (in Hampshire and Isle of Wight).
- More activity for 16-18 year olds, including Up for Your Future – using new media to reach students in FE colleges.
- Linking into the 14-19 agenda and progression routes for the new diplomas.
- Improving pre-entry advice and guidance for individual *UP for It* members and former members.

*UP for It Juniors* is running in all local primary schools and has been expanded to a range of primary schools in the surrounding area.

### **5.3 AimHigher**

The sub-regional AimHigher programme involves a consortium of local HEIs in Hampshire. The University of Portsmouth contributes to the delivery of a number of the Aimhigher action programmes and currently leads on two: Off Campus Aspiration Raising activities and Raising Attainment and Aspirations in Maths. The work carried out under the AimHigher programme complements the Universities Up for It and widening participation initiatives.

### **5.4 Supporting students with disabilities**

We are committed to support those students with a disability who seek to enter higher education and who may therefore require additional support. We welcome these students to the University and we wish to see them study successfully for their chosen qualification. We have established 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 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**

In 2006/07 we paid bursaries to slightly more than 30% of our first year students paying the higher tuition fee. The expanded range of bursaries from 2007/08 and increases to limits for eligibility from 2008/09 mean we are confident we will exceed this minimum target in latter years.

There is not yet any published data available for 2006/07 to determine if we have met the milestones relating to widening participation and retention. Data compiled inside the University would indicate we are on track to achieve these.

The Board of governors has ultimate responsibility for monitoring the Access Agreement. And its Student Academic and General Affairs Committee receives an annual report on the Access Agreement. A remedial action plan will be required in the event of a shortfall in performance against the targets.

## **SUMMARY**

**The University is committed to ensuring that the changed financial basis of higher education does not frustrate student's ambitions 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 enhanced.**