

ACCESS AGREEMENT FOR: THE WEST MERCIA CONSORTIUM

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The West Mercia Consortium is committed to widening participation and safeguarding access to its School Centred Initial Teacher Training courses.

2. Length of agreement

- 2.1 This agreement is for 5 years from the academic year 2006/07. However, we have committed to return to OFFA by May 2008 to seek approval for our monitoring criteria which, due to a lack of current relevant data, has not yet been developed (see section 7).

3. Fee limits

- 3.1 We will charge a fee of £3,000 for all full-time postgraduate ITT courses from the 2006/07 academic year. The fee limit will rise with inflation (in line with annually published Government regulations).

4. Bursary support

- 4.1 We will offer a bursary of £300 to any student who is in receipt of full state maintenance grant (Figures represent the position for 2006 and will be subject to inflationary rises). This bursary support will be new from 2006.
- 4.2 Bursary payments will be made in three instalments of £100. One at the start of each term.

5. Publicising fees and financial support

- 5.1 A number of methods will be used to ensure that prospective students are as clear as possible about the fee charged, and the amount of student support they may be entitled to. These are outlined below:
- 5.2 The website will contain a section on finance, including fee and support information. Support information will include institutional support and support available through the government through the maintenance grant, teaching bursaries and maintenance loans.
- 5.3 This information will also be published in our prospectus and in a leaflet which we will be used in the course of any outreach activity.
- 5.4 This information will be clearly articulated to applicants in writing at offer stage, before they make their key decisions on whether to accept a place.

6. Outreach

- 6.1 We will seek to identify areas of under-representation in our student cohort, when compared to HE sector from which we recruit. If we identify an area of significant under-representation, we will seek to address this and may do so by considering whether there might be any effective outreach initiatives which could be directed at such groups.

7. Institutional Targets and milestones

- 7.1 We do not currently collect data which would be suitable to determine baseline for targets and milestones around low income or socio-economic groups. However, we will wish to monitor the numbers of students participating in our institution who are in receipt of full or partial state support. We will also wish to develop targets around other under-represented groups if identified.
- 7.2 We will seek to maintain or increase the proportion of students in our target groups, but will only be able to set meaningful targets once data is available. Therefore, we commit to return to OFFA to revise this agreement by May 2008, with a view to an amended agreement taking effect from the 2008/9 academic year

8. Monitoring Arrangements

- 8.1 We will formally monitor the progress of the access agreement at least once a year through the senior management group who will report annually to the Board of Directors. Initial monitoring will be concerned with participation rates and the development of data on lower income and other under-represented groups, against which to monitor. When specific baselines, targets, and milestones are determined we will look to monitor against these.
- 8.2 Our annual report to the Board of Directors will form the basis of our annual monitoring report to OFFA.