



UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

ACCESS AGREEMENT

2013-14 Entrants

(as at July 2012)

These Access Agreement proposals are based on information and guidance available in May 2012. We reserve the right to submit a revised Access Agreement in the light of emerging details or other changes.

1. The University of Wolverhampton's Widening Participation Strategy

The University's new Strategic Plan (2012 to 2017) makes the following statement:

The University is a major contributor to the success of the higher education sector's influence in widening participation. This requires considerable investment in developing progression routes and coherent ladders of opportunities. The University will continue to be at the leading edge of promoting social mobility, enabling and contributing to the significant improvement in individual life chances across our communities. By providing the opportunity for individuals to engage in higher education we will be shaping economic and social regeneration in the years to come. We will build these ladders of opportunity on the changing needs of our students and the requirements of the changing world of employment.

This statement reflects the historic position of the University, which has consistently exceeded all widening participation benchmarks, and restates our commitment to retaining that position. The challenge for the University is two fold: to maintain its WP recruitment profile and to improve the outcomes (in terms of academic progression, employment and opportunities for further study) for its WP student population.

Both aspects of the University's approach to Widening Participation (recruitment and achievement) will be delivered through 'The Wolverhampton Offer – Enhancing the Student Experience Sub-Strategy'. In relation to recruitment, we have set the following goals:

- We will be a key player in raising aspirations and skills levels within the region through our work with schools, colleges, adult education, employers and the community.
- We will enhance our engagement with schools, increase our partnerships with Academies, Trusts and colleges and work across the wider region to promote the value and benefits of higher education, graduate level skills and graduate contributions to society and the economy.
- We will develop 'preferred partnerships' and aspirational partnerships with schools, colleges, employers and other stakeholders.

The sub-strategy then goes on to cover induction and transition; University life; achievement; employability/employment; and post qualification support.

2. The Role of the Access Agreement in the Widening Participation Strategy

This Access Agreement sets out how the University will utilise the new student funding framework to contribute towards its widening participation goals. This includes:

- How we will use the National Scholarship Programme to support high achieving entrants from poorer households; Deaf students; and care leavers.
- A financial support package designed to reward all students who successfully complete their first year and re-enrol for the second year, to improve retention and progression.
- A fee level for part-time students that is designed to provide a genuine high quality and low cost alternative route.
- The suite of projects and activities designed to maintain our WP recruitment profile and to improve the outcomes for those students.

3. Tuition Fees

For 2013-14 entrants the University's proposed standard tuition fee for home/EU students on full-time and sandwich undergraduate degree programmes, and the PGCE, will be £8650 p.a. The proposed fee for Foundation Degrees and HNC/D courses taught at the University is £7,120 p.a. Proposed tuition fees for full-time Foundation Degrees and HNC/Ds students taught in partner colleges will not exceed £6,000 p.a. The fee for 2013-14 entrants onto Foundation Year programmes (whether taught at the University or in partner colleges) will not exceed £6,000 p.a. There will be no tuition fee charged for sandwich year students. The fee for study year abroad students will not exceed the maximum permitted (currently the equivalent of £1,350 at 2012/13 prices).

The tuition fee for part-time students, whether University or College based, will not exceed the basic fee cap (£4500 p.a.) for 2012/13 entrants and 2013/14 entrants. This is in itself an Access measure, as it will provide an alternative route into higher education for any potential applicant who is deterred by higher tuition fees.

The University expects to revise tuition fees annually for 2013-14 entrants, in line with inflation.

NB: Courses funded by the NHS are not covered by this Agreement.

4. Expenditure on additional access, retention and employability measures

The University's entrant profile currently exceeds the national benchmarks on all widening participation measures (state school, lower socio-economic groups, low participation neighbourhoods). The University intends to maintain this profile, and broadly current intake levels.

We have been making good progress towards the national benchmarks on student retention and success, and will continue to focus our activities in this area. Our students have been successful in finding employment after graduating, though our HESA Employment Indicator dropped for 2009-10 leavers. Our aim remains to meet or exceed the national benchmark, notwithstanding the increasingly difficult economic climate and the particular West Midlands context. We have now developed an explicit Enterprise and Employability Sub-Strategy.

In 2013-14 the University plans to spend 27% of its additional tuition fee income on Access Agreement measures (including matching the National Scholarship Programme, and providing financial support for all full-time Home/EU first degree students on progression to the next year of study).

In 2013-14 the University's additional expenditure on current and previous Access Agreement commitments, for full-time and part-time students, will include:

Outreach (pre-entry) measures	
Start Right bursaries for continuing students	£850k
Delivering high quality school improvement services through the University's new Social Enterprise company – Education Central	This new social enterprise has a projected turnover of £3m p.a. in 2012/13. It will provide a commercial school improvement offer to schools including the delivery of national programmes such as a current Arts Council grant to develop creative and arts education in the region; act as a regional hub for Teach First and the Gifted and Talented initiative; and is DfE registered to act as an academy sponsor.
Supporting academies and trusts	Our existing Academies and Trusts Support Unit, has an expected spend of c. £300k by 2013-14.
	By 2013-14, working through the Academic and Trusts Unit and Education Central, we plan to have supported the development of 20 academies, with an average set-up spend of £70k per academy. We currently (2011-12) co-sponsor two academies and two University Technical Colleges.
Retention and employability (post-entry) measures	
Continuing Achievement Reward (retrospective fee waiver on successful re-enrolment to the second year).	The cost to the University for OFFA countable students is estimated to be £3.5m at the end of 2013/14.
Working with Tribal plc to build an early intervention tool using previous years' data to predict at risk students, based on a University pilot.	c. £10k for University of Wolverhampton staffing input.
Additional 'student support graduate interns', building on recent pilot project, including taking forward work piloted by the HEFCE 'Back on Course' project.	£100k p.a.

Reducing additional charges to students on courses with specific additional costs.	Activities or materials valued at £250k p.a. and previously charged out to students will now be covered in the tuition fee as outlined in our Statement on a Transparent Tuition Fee.
A range of new 'Employability' initiatives delivered under the University's new Enterprise and Employability sub-Strategy:	Opportunities for all students to undertake an element of structured work experience, participate in mentoring opportunities, receive high quality IAG and employability skills and have access to a job pool of employment opportunities
No tuition fee for sandwich year	£0 in 2013-14; £250k p.a. by 2014-15
Delivering a free 'Employability Award' for students alongside their main programme (pilot)	£60k p.a. from 2012/13 (estimated cost of programme delivery).
Delivering a Postgraduate Certificate in Employment and Enterprise (no fee to student if successfully completed)	£50k p.a. from 2012/13 (estimated cost of programme delivery).
'Employability' graduate interns, offering advice to unemployed graduates identified from DLHE survey	£20k p.a.
Enterprise and incubation programme, building on the existing SPEED project, which provides guidance, training and support during study and after graduation.	£150k p.a.

Based on the socio-economic profile of our region and our entrants, we estimate that at least £440k worth of pre-entry expenditure and £450k of post-entry expenditure will benefit OFFA countable learners. These activities will supplement other activities such as:

Outreach (pre-entry) measures	
Frank Buttle Trust Accreditation	We have achieved the Quality Mark for care leavers. .
Collaboration with FE Colleges (HE teaching)	The University is committed to sustaining and nurturing HE in FE by working in partnership to complement its own provision.

Sustaining Lifelong Learning Network initiatives	Successful LLN initiatives have been sustained
Schools and Colleges liaison (student recruitment and aspiration raising)	We have developed a new Framework for Engagement designed to target and prioritise our outreach work.
Collaborative outreach with schools, colleges and other bodies.	The University is engaged in the governance of 8 learning trusts, including the Halesowen Trust, which is a DfE exemplar.
Retention (post-entry) measures	
Institute of Learning Enhancement projects building on the legacy of our HEFCE Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, which focused on enabling achievement by students from under-represented backgrounds.	
Employability (post-entry) measures	.
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)	The University delivers the third highest number of KTPs in the UK (currently 33) enabling graduates to gain real experience working on a specific project in a company, typically for 2 years. A further programme (KEEN) has now been launched which will provide graduates with an opportunity to work full-time in a business on shorter term commercial projects developed in association with the University.
Graduate Internships	The University arranges over 100 internships annually through the Graduate Advantage (West Midlands) scheme and is now the regional co-ordinator for the national STEP programme.
Institute of Directors scheme	The University is partnering with the Institute of Directors to provide an opportunity for experienced business people to mentor final year University undergraduates and provide valuable advice on their future career developments.

5. Additional Financial Support for Students

University of Wolverhampton National Scholarships

The University will participate in the National Scholarship Programme.

In 2013-14 University of Wolverhampton National Scholarships are expected to be awarded to 700 entrants. There will be two schemes:

Scheme A

To be eligible for consideration, candidates must:

- Have applied to study (and subsequently enrol) on a full-time course with a tuition fee of £8650 p.a. or more.
- Be confirmed by the Student Loans Company not later than July 2013 as having a residual income of £25,000 or less.
- Have firmly accepted a conditional or unconditional offer of a place at the University of Wolverhampton by July 2013; and
- Have achieved a minimum 280 UCAS Tariff points or equivalent

Scheme B

To be eligible for consideration, candidates must:

- Have applied to study (and subsequently enrol) on a full-time course with a tuition fee of £6000 p.a. or more.
- Be confirmed by the Student Loans Company not later than July 2013 as having a residual income of £25,000 or less.
- Have firmly accepted a conditional or unconditional offer of a place at the University of Wolverhampton by July 2013; and

Either

- Be a disabled person with Deafness /hearing Loss or other hearing impairment and eligible for support via the Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) which has been declared to the University prior to enrolment.

Or

- Be a Care Leaver which must be declared to the University prior to enrolment. [A care leaver is someone who has previously lived with foster parents, in a children's home, orphanage, or sheltered accommodation. [The Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#) defines a care leaver as someone who has been in the care of the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or more spanning their 16th birthday].

For both schemes, applicants will be asked to confirm that they wish to be considered for a Scholarship. In the event that there are more eligible applicants than scholarships available, they will be awarded first to Scheme B applicants and then to Scheme A applicants on the basis of the date of receipt of UCAS application.

University of Wolverhampton National Scholarships will take the following form.

In a student's first year of study:

- A reduction of the tuition fee in 2013-14 by £1000.
- A cash payment of £1000.
- Either a reduction of at least £1000 on a place in University accommodation, or a further £1000 fee reduction.

University of Wolverhampton Continuing Achievement Reward Scheme

To support the retention and progression of students, UK and EU entrants in 2013-14 who are paying a tuition fee of £8650 or more will be eligible for a retrospective £1000 waiver on their first year fee when they re-enrol for the second year. National Scholarship holders are not eligible for this scheme.

6. Targets and Milestones

Detailed targets are set out in Annex B. In summary:

Access targets

- To maintain the current number of entrants.
- To maintain above benchmark performance for the admission of students from state schools, lower socio-economic groups, and low participation neighbourhoods.
- To reach and then exceed benchmark for the admission of students in receipt of the Disabled Student Allowance.
- For PGCE, to maintain BME recruitment at or above TDA target of 18%.
- For PGCE, to maintain recruitment from first generation in HE entrants above 50%.

Retention and achievement targets

- To exceed benchmark for the retention of students in each category identified in the HESA performance indicators (i.e. young and mature, and by neighbourhood participation markers).
- To increase the proportion of students who complete first degree courses to benchmark levels To increase the proportion of students awarded first class or upper second class degrees
- To increase the proportion of BME students awarded first class or upper second class degrees.

Employability targets

- To re-establish benchmark performance for graduate employment
- To exceed the UK average graduate employment rate by 2014/15.
- To achieve 95% graduate employment or further study in the longer term.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The main targets and milestones will be incorporated into the University's Key Performance Indicator set. These indicators are reviewed annually by relevant University committees, including Academic Board and the Board of Governors, all of which include student representatives. Overall managerial responsibility for the Access Agreement lies with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Recruitment).

8. Provision of information to prospective students

The University provides the information specified in the OFFA Guidance circular (March 2011/1), including the provision of information to UCAS and the Student Loans Company, as required to populate their applicant-facing web services. The University will additionally use the following forms of communication:

- Website Portal devoted to information on Fees and Scholarships 2013-14
- Information on Fees/Scholarships 2013-14 for applicants on students application portal (E:Vision)
- Fees and Funding presentations at all open days (hand-outs provided)
- Specific Fees and Funding presentations to top 100 feeder schools/colleges delivered throughout the academic year
- Fees and Funding 2013-14 'Money Matters' brochure to be produced and distributed to all local/regional stakeholders (Schools/Libraries/Town Halls/Community organisations)
- Briefing sessions for local/regional HE advisors in local/regional schools during 2012-13 academic year

9. Student Involvement in Access Agreement Design and Monitoring

Since December 2011 the President of the Students' Union has been a member of the University's Fees, Bursaries and Scholarships Working Group which keeps under review University tuition fee policy and makes recommendations where required to the Corporate Management Team and the Board of Governors. The President of the Students' Union has been actively involved throughout the process of the development of this Access Agreement.

10. Equality and Diversity

The proposals contained in the University's Access Agreements for 2012-13 entry and 2013-14 entry have been evaluated under the new procedure for Equalities Impact Assessment approved by our Corporate Management Team in May 2012. This has considered whether any aspect of the proposals is likely to have an unintended detrimental impact on any of twelve categories of student, including the six protected characteristics, and has identified action taken, or to be taken, to address issues raised.

11. Summary

The challenge for the University of Wolverhampton is to maintain its existing excellent widening participation profile and recruitment of students from disadvantaged groups under new market conditions, and to continue to improve student outcomes, in particular retention and employability.

