

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

ACCESS AGREEMENT

2016-17 Entrants

(as at April 2015)

These Access Agreement proposals are based on information and guidance available in April 2015. 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

INTRODUCTION:

The University's 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 three-fold: to grow student numbers; to maintain its WP recruitment profile and to continue to improve the outcomes (in terms of academic progression, employment and opportunities for further study) for its WP student population. This challenge is the essence of our role as the University of Opportunity.

The University has embarked on a review of the enabling sub-strategies that underpin the overall strategic plan – to “take stock” of our progress prior to beginning a more complete review of our strategic plan in 2016-17 – the period of this access agreement. We would expect some of our strategic ambitions to change and develop at this time, to reflect our progress and achievements and also to reflect changes in the national policy context; a change of government and any sectoral changes, for example, changes to the provision of the Disabled Student Allowance. We would also expect however that our commitment to widening participation and providing opportunities for social mobility will be at the core of our offer.

The University has recently renewed its enabling sub-strategy – **The Wolverhampton Offer:**

“A high quality student experience which is clearly identifiable as the “Wolverhampton Offer” will enable us to differentiate ourselves, and so allow us to effectively compete regionally, nationally and internationally...”

“Encapsulated in a distinctive Wolverhampton offer we want to deliver the best possible experience for all our student constituencies which is vocationally relevant and provides transformational opportunities. Our vision is to promote social mobility and improve the individual life chances of the people within the communities we operate in”.

The Wolverhampton Offer is aligned to our Access Agreement and sets out our ambitions for raising aspirations prior to commencing formal, higher study:

Aspiration and progression	We will develop seamless progression routes and raise aspirations and skills levels within the regions where we operate through direct intervention and partnership.
Opportunity for all	We are committed to finding an appropriate educational programme for all our applicants, whether at the University or with one of our educational partners.

Application processes	Our application processes will be transparent and timely.
Developing student expectations	Applicants will have opportunities to interact with the University to understand the learning experiences they will engage with when they start their studies. We will help students recognise the necessary commitment of both themselves and the University in the learning journey, the environment and culture of the University of Wolverhampton, and will be prepared for their studies.
Pre-enrolment preparation	All students will receive guidance and support to prepare them for their studies and student life at Wolverhampton.

The Wolverhampton Offer establishes a whole institution approach to the student lifecycle, incorporating - Student Induction and Transition; Opportunities for Learning, Teaching and Assessment; Opportunities and Support beyond the classroom; Study Success and Opportunities after graduation.

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

This Access Agreement sets out how the University utilises the 2012 student funding framework to contribute towards its widening participation goals. This includes:

- Scholarship schemes for high achievers, and for sports excellence – 50% of whom, given our entry profile, will be from low income households – and for students from key partners in our Schools Engagement Framework.
- Progression Scholarships for new entrants from our School & College partners serving areas of traditionally low participation in higher education.
- A bursary scheme for d/Deaf entrants and care leavers.
- A lower fee for part-time students designed to provide a genuine high quality and low cost alternative route.
- A suite of projects and activities designed to maintain our WP recruitment profile and to improve the outcomes for those students.

3. Tuition Fees

For 2016-17 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 £9000 p.a. The proposed fee for Foundation Degrees and HNC/D courses taught at the University will not exceed £7570 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 2016-17 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 or for study year abroad students.

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

Where permitted, the University expects to revise tuition fees annually for 2016-17 entrants, in line with inflation.

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

4. Access, retention and employability measures

The University's entrant profile continues to exceed 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 to grow student numbers, thereby significantly increasing the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We have made good progress on student retention and success, and will continue to focus activities in this area. The 2015 HESA Performance Indicators demonstrate considerable progress and show that we have met several of our Access Agreement targets ahead of schedule. Following the implementation of our new Enterprise and Employability Strategy, our HESA Employment Indicator for 2013-14 (to be published next month) has improved again, and we expect to meet our benchmark, notwithstanding the difficult economic climate and the particular West Midlands context. The challenge for the University will be to maintain and build on these excellent outcomes.

The major expenditure incurred is in supporting a widening participation student base. Additionally, the University expects to spend at least 10% of its additional tuition fee income on more specific Access Agreement and related measures. Our activities will include, for example:

Long-Term Outreach (pre-entry) measures	
<p>Delivery of the Schools Engagement Strategy - An integrated overarching strategy approved by Governors in March 2014 with the following objectives:</p>	<p>To improve the performance of schools in our region;</p> <p>To contribute to economic growth of the region through raising skills levels.</p> <p>The strategy will be delivered via three levels of engagement for schools, covering activities such as academy sponsorship; initial teacher training and CPD (pedagogy and academic subject); progression agreements; bursaries; access to University facilities; outreach.</p> <p>We currently co-sponsor two academies and two University Technical Colleges. We are lead sponsor of a third UTC. Through Education Central Multi-Academy Trust we currently sponsor a further 13 academies.</p> <p>We support the Church of England Central Education Trust – with the Dioceses of Lichfield and Birmingham – to secure high standards in 250 church schools.</p>

<p>Accessible Advice & Guidance:</p>	<p>We operate two high street advice and guidance centres for information to the community about study options and access to higher education – The Gateway @ The George in Wolverhampton City Centre The Gateway @ Shire Hall in Stafford Town Centre.</p>
<p>Development and delivery of distributed learning centres:</p>	<p>We are opening a new Centre – University Centre Telford - a partnership with Telford College of Arts & Technology and Future Focus (Local Authority Advice & Guidance Service) for progression advice, teaching and learning activity, tasters and community events in the heart of Telford Town Centre as part of the Southwater One Library Complex.</p> <p>We expect the availability of more local provision and support to be of particular value to part-time and mature students.</p>
<p>Delivering high quality school improvement services through the University’s Social Enterprise company – Education Central:</p>	<p>In addition to acting as a MAT, Education Central provides a commercial school improvement offer including the delivery of national programmes (e.g. Arts Council projects to develop creative and arts education in the region); acting as a regional hub for Teach First and the Gifted and Talented initiative.</p>
<p>The Black Country Children’s University:</p>	<p>The Black Country Children’s University™ (BCCU) currently comprises three campuses in Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley, with a further Walsall campus joining in 2015. Coordinated by the University of Wolverhampton, the BCCU is part of the national Children’s University Trust.</p> <p><i>“At the heart of its work is the ambition to raise aspirations, boost achievement and foster a love of learning so that young people can make the most of their abilities and interests”.</i></p>
<p>Inspiring Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners:</p>	<p>Drawing on significant expertise and community links the University is a leading recruiter of Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners. We offer a dedicated Deaf and Hard of Hearing Learners Open Day (now in its third year) and are the main sponsors of DEAFFEST 2015.</p>

Inspiring Looked After Children:	Working with three local authority “Virtual Schools” the University coordinates research and a dedicated mentoring programme for Looked After Children.
Promoting STEM subjects through Sci Fest: Science activities associated with the launch of our new £25M Science Centre – The Rosalind Franklin Building:	Now in its fourth year - Our week-long celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths with dedicated “Primary Day”, “GCSE Day”, “A-Level Day” and Family Day. Opened in September 2014 - features a dedicated outreach classroom for use with Schools and Colleges.
ArtsFest & Sports Fest:	Building on the successful model established by SciFest these two new festivals seek to celebrate and encourage participation in the Arts and Sports with events and activities aimed at families and young people.
The Pitch:	Now in its third year – a residential business challenge programme where teams of Year 10 and 11 students come up with creative solutions to real-life challenges set by well-known local businesses and engaging 30 schools.
Reduced part-time tuition fees:	The University has established a lower part-time fee level that promotes and encourages flexible part-time study. This measure is focussed on mature and “in-work” learners who might not otherwise consider a full-time study option.
<i>The University is also the lead institution in the recently launched Explore Network – a collaborative network with Keele, Staffordshire and Harper Adams Universities. This network aims to reach out to schools, with a focus on raising aspirations amongst younger (primary age) children through activities that are not otherwise reflected in this access agreement.</i>	
Retention, attainment and employability measures	
BME attainment projects: The University is participating in the National What Works Project to develop interventions that will seek to reduce the attainment gap amongst BME students.	Appointment of 20 new graduate teaching assistants, focussed on supporting all Level 4 students in understanding assessment requirements, in response to evidence that this specific intervention improves BME student attainment and supports overall retention. <i>The scheme has been expanded in 2015 to provide for 40 Graduate Teaching Assistants.</i>

Employing graduate interns to deliver a range of support and advice services to existing students.	We currently employ 40 graduate interns in a range of roles supporting student engagement and achievement. In addition to those student support interns who directly contribute to retention a range of opportunities are provided through a salaried scheme that gives employment and training opportunities to recent graduates.
Reducing additional charges to students on courses with specific additional costs.	Activities/materials valued at £250k p.a., previously charged out to students, are now covered in the tuition fee (as per our Statement on a Transparent Tuition Fee).
Provision for students previously supported by the DSA.	We will develop options to provide alternative support to students no longer eligible for DSA support. <i>The University has committed to offering financial support for students in hardship who cannot meet the first £200.00 payable for any essential learning equipment.</i>
Hardship funds	We will maintain the level of financial support for students previously earmarked as the Access to Learning Fund. <i>The University has committed £630,000 to a new Dennis Turner Opportunity Fund replacing the previous Access to Learning Fund.</i>
'Skills for Learning' support provided in Learning Centres:	The University supports students at all levels through an extensive programme of on-line support, workshops and individual guidance delivered beyond the curriculum through our Learning Centres.
A range of 'Employability' initiatives delivered under the University's Enterprise and Employability sub-Strategy:	<p>Opportunities for all students to undertake structured work experience, participate in mentoring opportunities, receive high quality IAG and have access to a job pool of employment opportunities.</p> <p>The University offers an integrated "Employability Award" that works in parallel with the curriculum to offer an opportunity to recognise and reflect on employability skills.</p> <p>We have one of the highest numbers of KTPs in the UK; and we have introduced a further scheme (KEEN) which provides graduates with an opportunity to work full-time in a business on short-term commercial projects.</p>

	The University operates the regional SPEED programme which offers recent graduates support in establishing their own commercial business.
Volunteering Bureau – Active Volunteers:	A joint Students’ Union/University initiative designed to offer students the opportunity to improve their employability through volunteering activities.

The proposals outlined in this Access Agreement continue to develop our on-going work, endorsed by our Board of Governors, reflecting four key areas:

First, where appropriate we will employ students or graduate interns to undertake outreach/enrichment and student support work, which will mean that additional financial support will be available to students, but in the form of payment for work undertaken (with associated employment experience) rather than simply as a scholarship or fee waiver.

Secondly, through our Schools & Colleges Engagement Strategy, which envisages holistic and joined-up engagement with academies, trusts, schools and colleges, encompassing the work of our social enterprise Education Central, our own outreach, and direct provision of, and wider support for, teacher training.

Thirdly, we will develop, in partnership with a range of public and private providers, distributed provision to enable students who are less geographically mobile to participate in our programmes – through our distributed learning centres and the development of initiatives to reach out to family members (Adult Learners) via our partner schools.

Fourthly, we will continue to enhance the employability of our students as a direct means of influencing social mobility.

5. Additional Financial Support for Students

Distinction Scholarships

Scholarships will be provided to all UK-based entrants with ABB grades at A level, or equivalent (as defined by HEFCE).

Sports Scholarships

A fixed number of scholarships will be offered for entrants with an outstanding record in sport.

Progression Scholarships

A fixed number of scholarships will be reserved for candidates nominated by schools and colleges participating in the University's Schools Engagement Framework.

Access Bursaries

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.
- Have firmly accepted a conditional or unconditional offer of a place at the University of Wolverhampton by July 2016; and

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. (If necessary, this criterion may be reviewed in the light of the detailed Government changes to DSA eligibility expected to be developed shortly).

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].

All four schemes will take the form of a £2000 cash payment paid in two instalments during the course of the student's first year of study.

These schemes are not specifically targeted at 'OFFA countable students', but as more than 50% of our overall intake comes from the lowest income groups, and our key partner schools are based in low participation neighbourhoods, it is assumed that 50% of Distinction Scholars and Sports scholars, and 80% of Partnership Scholars, will be 'OFFA countable'.

6. Targets and Milestones

Access targets

- To increase the number of entrants.
- To maintain and improve above benchmark performance for the admission of students from state schools, lower socio-economic groups, and low participation neighbourhoods.
- To increase the number and proportion of disabled students.
- To increase the number of part-time and mature entrants

Retention and achievement targets

- To maintain above benchmark the retention of students in each category identified in the HESA performance indicators (i.e. young and mature, and by neighbourhood participation markers).
- To maintain above benchmark the proportion of students who complete first degree courses.
- 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 maintain above benchmark performance for graduate employment
- To exceed and maintain the UK average graduate employment rate.
- To achieve 95% graduate employment or further study.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The main targets and milestones are incorporated into the University's Key Performance Indicator framework. 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 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Access and Lifelong Learning).

The University has twelve principal KPIs, five of which relate to our Access Agreement:

- Grow student numbers (KPI 1).
- Extend or maintain the diversity of our student base across all equality categories, and from low socio-economic backgrounds, at above benchmark (KPI 2).
- Above benchmark for graduate employability indicator in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education return (KPI 5).
- Improve annually our performance for student retention and progression against the sector benchmark (KPI 7).
- Firsts and 2.1s to improve to England average and projected student completion to be above benchmark (KPI 8).

We are continuing to develop and invest in effective monitoring and evaluation to be assured of the effectiveness of our widening participation activity. In addition to our own datasets and nationally derived benchmarks and indicators the University is developing tools and

seeking to utilise other data sets which will be a valuable tool in assessing the impact of our long-term outreach work.

8. Provision of information to prospective students

The University provides the information specified by OFFA, 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:

- Web-based information on Fees and Scholarships 2016-17
- Information on Fees/Scholarships 2016-17 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 2016-17 '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 2015-16 academic year.
- Improved information for mature applicants.
- Direct Advice & Guidance via our high street centres and distributed learning centres.

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 and the associated *Wolverhampton Offer*.

10. Equality and Diversity

The proposals contained in the University's Access Agreements 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 University of Wolverhampton makes a significant financial investment in supporting a widening participation student base. In addition to this, the University expects to spend at least 10% of its additional tuition fee income on more specific Access Agreement and related interventions. The challenge for the University of Wolverhampton continues to be to grow its student body while retaining its existing excellent widening participation profile, and to continue to improve student outcomes, especially for BME students.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Institution name: The University of Wolverhampton

Institution UKPRN: 10007166

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
T16a_01	HESA T1b - State School (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Maintain above benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	98.9	98	98	98	98	98	09-10 benchmark was 96.5%
T16a_02	HESA T1b - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Maintain above benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	49.1	49	49	49	49	49	09-10 benchmark nwas 39.4%
T16a_03	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Maintain above benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	23.1	23	23	23	23	23	09-10 benchmark was 14.6%
T16a_04	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	10.1	8	8	8	8	8	09-10 benchmark was 9.6%
T16a_05	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	15.5	13.5	13	13	13	13	09-10 benchmark was 13.8%
T16a_06	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (All, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	12	10.5	10	10	10	10	09-10 benchmark was 11.1%
T16a_07	HESA T3b - No longer in HE after 1 year & other neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	11.8	11	10.8	10.5	10.5	10.5	09-10 benchmark was 10.8%
T16a_08	HESA T5 - Projected degree (full-time, first degree entrants)	Improve % predicted to complete 1st degree to benchmark	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	71.6	73	73.4	73.5	73.5	73.5	09-10 benchmark was 73.4%
T16a_09	HESA T2b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (All, part-time, entrants)	Increase the number of part-time undergraduate entrants to 1830	No	2013-14	1665	1700	1730	1760	1800	1830	13-14 number was 1665
T16a_10	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase % of first degree 1st and 2:1s to UK average	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	49.3	56	58	58	58	58	09-10 UK average was 58.1%
T16a_11	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Maintain DLHE employed or further study above benchmark and improve to UK average	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	87.8	90	91	91	91	91	08-09 benchmark was 87.3%, UK average 89.9%
T16a_12	HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	Reach then exceed benchmark for % of 'all students' in receipt of DSA	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	4%	6%	6.5%	7%	7%	7%	2010-11 benchmark was 6.4%, England average was 5.4%
T16a_13	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Increase the % of BME graduates achieving 1st or 2:1s	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	37%	47%	50%	52%	52%	52%	

Notes

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around outreach and student success work (including collaborative work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access, student success and progression. These should be measurable outcomes-based targets and should focus on the number of beneficiaries reached by a particular activity/programme or the number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	

Optional commentary on milestones.

This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.