



# **UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON**

## **ACCESS AGREEMENT**

**2011/12 Entrants**

**(Submitted November 2010)**

## **1. Fee Limits**

For 2011/12 the University will charge a tuition fee of £3,375 per year for home/EU students on its full-time and sandwich undergraduate degree and PGCE programmes.

For Foundation Degree and HNC/D students a lower fee of £2,300 is proposed to be charged.

## **2. Bursaries and other Financial Support**

### **Arrangements for payment of minimum standard bursaries**

The University anticipates that over 50% of its student entrants in 2011/12 will qualify for the maximum Higher Education maintenance grant. These students, where studying for a first degree (bachelor's degree) will receive a Start Right Bursary award from the University which will include the national minimum standard bursary payment. The University is utilizing the national Higher Education Bursaries and Scholarship Scheme (HEBSS) for the assessment and payment of its Start Right Bursaries, which include the payment of the national minimum standard bursary via the Student Loans Company.

The University is fully committed to increasing the amount of minimum standard bursary paid on its behalf by the SLC in line with OFFA guidance.

### **Additional 'University of Wolverhampton' Student Financial Support Schemes**

For UK entrants to first degree (bachelor's degree) courses from 2011/12 the University will provide the following package of additional financial support. Entrants from earlier years will continue to be eligible for bursaries described in our earlier Access Agreements. The proposals below relate only to 2011 entrants.

#### Start-Right Bursary Scheme

Where the fee charged for a course is £3,375 (except for PGCE) this scheme offers additional financial support to those whose "family" income assessments for HE Grant purposes are below £35,000 p.a.

<i>Family Income Assessment</i>	<i>Start Right Bursary</i>
£25,000 p.a. or less	£500 p.a. (including minimum standard bursary)
£25,001 to £35,000	£338 p.a.

The maximum Start Right Bursary payable to PGCE students will be the standard minimum bursary. This is in recognition of the fact that all PGCE students receive a non-means tested HE maintenance grant plus additional state bursaries on top of the help provided by the University.

### Student Achievement Scholarships

Schools and colleges, who are partners of the University through the Making Choices Partnership or University of Wolverhampton Collaborative Achievement Network (UWCAN) agreement, will nominate students for these scholarships which are worth £1,000 each, and awarded to students during the first year of their degree at the University.

To be nominated, students will have progressed further in their studies than predicted (for example based upon Key Stage 2 and 3 performance), have demonstrated that they are well motivated and engaged with their learning, and shown a genuine interest in continuing their studies into higher education.

### Sports Achievement Scholarships

These scholarships are worth up to £1,000 for the first year of study and £1,000 for years two and three, pro-rata to the length of course and to a maximum of £3,000. Awards for years two and three of study are dependent upon excellent performance during the preceding year of study. To be eligible, students must demonstrate outstanding achievement in their field of sport, for example, achieve national and or regional ranking.

## **3. Outreach Activity**

The University has a long-term commitment to access and widening participation and has consistently surpassed its benchmarks in national HEFCE performance indicators for the recruitment of full-time undergraduate entrants from poor socio/economic groups and ethnic minorities (see Section 6 – Milestones and Objectives).

The University will build on its aspiration building activities during the period covered by this Access Agreement through the Collaborative Framework for schools and colleges and the continuing work of the Education Partnerships Division. Schools and colleges can choose from three different levels of engagement with the University:

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| First level:  | Aspiration raising; introduction to University life; master classes; tasters.  |
| Second level: | HE modules taught in schools; vocational equivalents – especially in areas corresponding to the new Diplomas.  |
| Third level:  | Discrete and bespoke curriculum development, with a focus on diploma developments, driven by local need and context; bespoke CPD for staff; resource creation to support delivery. |

The attached table, included under Milestones and Objectives, is illustrative of the range, reach and nature of activity within the Collaborative Framework. Further information has been provided in the University's Widening Participation Strategic Assessment.

#### **4. Provision of Information to Students (and their advisers)**

A comprehensive and ongoing communications strategy is in place which targets advisers as well as prospective and current students. It sets out to utilise a broad range of communication vehicles to provide pro-active, customised advice, information and guidance in a variety of settings.

In addition to ensuring a supply of printed and 'real-time' electronic sources of information, the Wolverhampton strategy puts great emphasis on the need to provide year-on-year personalised briefings via conferences, seminars, advice clinics and bespoke presentations geared to specific local audiences.

Website: A key vehicle for disseminating the latest information as quickly as possible. The University's website provides enquirers with easy access to information about the University's bursary schemes, the national loan and grant schemes and a range of additional financial information including fees, payment arrangements, discount, state benefits, additional scholarships available etc.

Prospectus: Expected to remain as a key vehicle for imparting course information to prospective students it also continues as a major reference resource for intermediary advisors (Careers Advisors, Connexions Staff, teachers etc). The prospectus contains a substantial Advice and Guidance section including dedicated 'Money Pages'. Given the lengthy production time frame for the prospectus, and the need to refer prospective students to the latest information on fees and bursaries etc. the prospectus money section is used primarily to direct readers to the source of real time information on the University's website plus contact numbers allowing personalised access to the University's team of expert advisers.

#### Specialised Student Finance Publications:

A series of 'Money Matters' leaflets is produced and disseminated at strategic points throughout the year including the University's series of corporate Open Days in June, August, September and November.

Briefings for Advisers: The University offers a series of half-day conferences for groups such as regional Connexions personal advisers, teaching staff in schools with responsibility for careers guidance and student services staff in local colleges of further education. Questions and answer sessions are run by the University's expert education guidance officers and all delegates receive conference packs containing briefing notes, references to our website information resource, and copies of our specialist financial publications. Head teachers, heads of year, etc. are offered the opportunity to book bespoke presentations to help inform school governors, parents and other teaching staff.

University Staff Briefings: It is vitally important that all University staff give out accurate information about the national and local situation. The University organises briefings for both academic and non-academic support staff and utilise the University's electronic newsletter and website finance pages to keep staff information up-to-date. Finance briefings feature in the induction programmes for all newly appointed academic staff.

## **5. Monitoring Arrangements**

Procedures are in place to monitor the effectiveness of specific Outreach activities (i.e. via participant evaluation questionnaires and focus groups) and feedback is incorporated into regular activity reports presented to the University's Executive.

Overall monitoring of the University's performance in attracting applications from, and recruiting, under-represented groups will continue to be via a combination of published HESA data (measuring performance against benchmarks) and UCAS/institutional data on applicant profiles analysed by ethnicity, socio/economic and occupational groups, postcode and previous institution. This data will provide the major measure of progress towards the Milestone/Objective of maintaining a performance significantly above benchmark for social inclusion, despite the possible deterrent effect of top-up fees.

Annual reports on the schemes covered by the Access Agreement, including a review of progress made towards the targets set out above, will be made to Academic Board and Board of Governors. The reports will be drawn up by the Student Affairs Committee, chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs), which will include Students' Union representation.

The challenge for the University of Wolverhampton is to maintain its existing excellent widening participation profiles and its recruitment of students from disadvantaged groups, under new market conditions.