



UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

ACCESS AGREEMENT

2014-15 Entrants

(as at December 2013)

These Access Agreement proposals are based on information and guidance available in April 2013, subsequently revised following changes in Government policy in November 2013. 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:
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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, and sponsorship of, Academies, Trusts, UTCs 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 fee level for part-time students that is 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 2014-15 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 £8900 p.a. The proposed fee for Foundation Degrees and HNC/D courses taught at the University is £7325 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 2014-15 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 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 2014-15 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 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 broadly current intake levels.

We have made steady progress 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. Following the implementation of our new Enterprise and Employability Strategy, our HESA Employment Indicator for 2011-12 (to be published next month) has improved, with over 90% of our graduates in employment or further study. Our aim remains to meet or exceed the national benchmark, notwithstanding the increasingly difficult economic climate and the particular West Midlands context.

In 2014-15 the University plans to spend 22.5% of its additional tuition fee income on Access Agreement measures. Expenditure on current and previous Access Agreement commitments, for full-time and part-time students, will include:

Outreach (pre-entry) measures	
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, UTCs and trusts	<p>By 2014-15, working through Education Central and through direct engagement, we plan to act as sponsor of 20 to 25 academies, with an average set-up spend of £40k to £100k per academy.</p> <p>We currently (2012-13) co-sponsor two academies and two University Technical Colleges. We are lead sponsor of a third UTC.</p>
Launch of a new Student Gateway to the University, opening in Spring 2013	The new Gateway offers a new and more accessible 'shop window' for access to the University, supported by additional staffing provision. The launch of the Gateway also marks the formal implementation of targeted programme of outreach activities organised along Aimhigher principles of engagement, including the examples below.
Development of an evaluated North West Midlands AimHigher programme in collaboration with Harper Adams, Keele and Staffordshire Universities	Plans include campus visits, two conferences, an e-mentoring programme, taster courses, specialist Open Days for learners with disabilities in years 9 to 11.
Children's University	Annual summer schools for year 6 pupils; campus visits for years 6 and 8, subject taster sessions.
Science activities associated with the launch of our new Science Centre	Including our annual 'SciFest' activities.
Developing University of Wolverhampton sponsored sixth forms	Up to six sponsored sixth forms are planned to be established in 2013-14. Associated activities are planned to include Year 12 summer schools, 'University buddies'/mentors and hosting educational programmes for adults to support part-time adult returners.
Further development of our Gold, Silver and Bronze engagement framework.	Activities include UCAS guidance, student finance, student life workshops. The planned 'audience' is 14000 learners, 1500 teachers and 600 parents.

Retention and employability (post-entry) measures	
Building an early intervention tool, with Tribal plc, using previous years' data to predict at risk students, based on a University pilot.	c. £10k for University of Wolverhampton staffing input.
'Student support graduate interns', including taking forward work piloted by the HEFCE 'Back on Course' project.	£100k p.a. The University also subscribes to Student Relaunch, which provides further support for students who withdraw prematurely.
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 I now covered in the tuition fee as outlined in our Statement on a Transparent Tuition Fee.
<p>A range of 'Employability' initiatives delivered under the University's new Enterprise and Employability sub-Strategy:</p> <p>No tuition fee for sandwich year and year abroad students.</p> <p>Delivering a free 'Employability Award' for students alongside their main programme (pilot)</p> <p>Delivering a Postgraduate Certificate in Employment and Enterprise (no fee to student if successfully completed)</p> <p>'Employability' graduate interns, offering advice to unemployed graduates identified from DLHE survey</p> <p>Enterprise and incubation programme, building on the existing SPEED project, which provides guidance, training and support during study and after graduation.</p>	<p>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</p> <p>c. £100k p.a. by 2014-15</p> <p>£60k p.a.</p> <p>£50k p.a.</p> <p>£40k p.a.</p> <p>£150k p.a.</p>

Based on the socio-economic profile of our region and our entrants, we estimate that at least £900k 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. The University is also a member of the National Care Leavers Group and West Midlands Care Leavers Network.
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.
Employability (post-entry) measures	.
Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs)	The University one of the highest number of KTPs in the UK 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.
Mentors	The University is partnering a number of organisations, including 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.

Expenditure in future years will reflect our strategic priorities of maintaining our widening participation student population profile and improving retention and employability. The measures described above represent a minimum level of expenditure, which we expect to supplement through further measures to be reported in future Access Agreements. Our focus is on achieving outcomes for our students, and are measured in Key Performance Indicators reviewed annually by our Board of Governors.

The proposals outlined in our 2014-15 Access Agreement reflect two key developments, endorsed by our Board of Governors:

First, in response to sector evidence and priorities, a shift away from direct financial support to students, which is now concentrated on our National Scholarship Programme, towards outreach. Where appropriate we will employ students or graduate interns to undertake the relevant outreach/enrichment work, which will mean that much of the money will still be paid 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, the University's emerging strategy for a holistic and joined-up engagement with academies, trusts and schools, encompassing the work of our social enterprise Education Central, our own outreach work (which is being relaunched as part of a new Student Gateway), and direct provision of, and wider support for, teacher training. These will build on the continuing improvement of Black Country schools, where the rate of pupils attaining 5 A* to C GCSEs has improved by 7.7 percentage points from 2004 to 2012, compared with a national improvement of 5.3 percentage points, and now exceeds the England average.

5. Additional Financial Support for Students

University of Wolverhampton National Scholarships

The University will participate in the National Scholarship Programme.

In 2014-15 University of Wolverhampton National Scholarships are expected to be awarded to 1130 entrants. There will be three 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 £8900 p.a. or more.
- Be confirmed by the Student Loans Company not later than July 2014 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 2014; 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 2014 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 2014; 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 schemes A and B, 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.

Scheme C

A fixed number of scholarships will be reserved for candidates nominated by partner academies and UTCs, and other partner schools and colleges, who meet the national income threshold.

For all three schemes, University of Wolverhampton National Scholarships will take the form of a £2000 cash payment paid in two instalments during the course of the student's first year of study.

6. Targets and Milestones

Access targets

- To at least 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 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).

The University is developing an evaluation framework aligned with outcomes from the HEFCE Higher Education Outreach to Widen Participation Toolkits, and recently (March 2013) hosted a regional partners' event to introduce the toolkits and review how to apply them in practice.

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 2014-15
- Information on Fees/Scholarships 2014-15 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 2014-15 '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 2013-14 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 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 continues to be to maintain its existing excellent widening participation profile and recruitment of students from disadvantaged groups under new market conditions, and to improve student outcomes, in particular retention and employability.

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.

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