

UNIVERSITY OF HULL: ACCESS AGREEMENT 2013/14

1 Introduction/Summary

The University of Hull is situated on two campuses, in Hull and Scarborough, both of them areas of relatively low population density and relatively low educational aspiration. In 2012, the total student population stands at approximately 20,000 learners.

“The University of Hull remains as committed as it was at the time of its foundation to raising educational aspirations, especially in the communities it most directly serves. We will ensure that we remain accessible to all students with the potential to succeed, regardless of their financial circumstances.”¹

The University of Hull proposes the bulk of full time fees will remain at £9,000 for entrants in 2013/14. Part time fees will continue to be brought in line with those charged for FT programmes. Providing accurate indications of anticipated entrant numbers is challenging as student behaviour following the introduction of the new fees system and the impact of significant changes to our part time provision remain unknown.

The University has concerns that the new fees regime may impact disproportionately on those from under-represented groups. Whilst it is still unknown if such concern is justified the opportunity was taken in 2011/12 to enhance approaches to both access and retention when the strength of local Aimhigher arrangements was successfully captured in the transfer of key staff and activities and the University’s retention strategy was reviewed. Improvements in activities and structures to support both access and retention should ensure that disadvantaged learners continue to enter the University and leave as successful graduates.

An assessment of our performance suggests a focus on both access and retention continues to be appropriate. The University performs well against HESA Performance Indicators, particularly in terms of entrants from state schools, low participation neighbourhoods and entrants in receipt of disabled students’ allowance (DSA). The University also performs well in aspects of retention and efforts are increasing to improve retention rates of young FT First Degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods.

Whilst acknowledging the national evidence² on the lack of impact of bursaries on learner choice of HE provider, our experience of supporting large numbers of learners from under-represented groups over many years, together with strong arguments from our student union, suggests successful outcomes require the provision of financial support during the learning period. We therefore intend to continue to maximise the number of first year £3,000 support packages available to those from

¹ University of Hull Strategic Plan 2011-2015 Introduction

² <http://www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Have-bursaries-influenced-choices-between-universities-.pdf>

low income backgrounds (incorporating those available under the National Scholarships Programme (NSP)), as well as dedicate funds to increasingly targeted outreach and retention activities. The number of scholarships available to students from low income backgrounds will increase although we will no longer be offering full fee waivers.

ALL eligible entrants will continue to receive either a bursary/scholarship worth £3,000/£9,000 respectively and the University will provide any additional finance required to support the resulting numbers.

The University's long history of collaboration with regional Universities and HE in FE providers, as well as strong relationships with the majority of local schools and colleges will continue to be enhanced in 2013/14.

The University will continue to work to achieve the targets and milestones published in the 2012/13 Access Agreement. Key areas of work include the provision of information to potential learners and arrangements for monitoring/evaluating success of outreach and retention.

2 Fees, student numbers, fee income and fee rises in subsequent years

2.1 Intended tuition fees charges for new fee-regulated full-time entrants in 2013-14

The University of Hull intends to continue to charge a standard tuition fee of £9,000 for new full time honours degree undergraduate entrants in 2013/14³, including those on undergraduate initial teacher training courses and those topping up to honours from a Foundation Degree (latter applicable from 2014/15).

Non standard fees will continue to be charged to entrants on:

- Foundation Degree programmes (£7,000 per year)
- Foundation Year 0 programmes (£6,000)

Non standard fees will continue to be charged for:

- Year abroad/placement years (according to Government guidance and depending on a student's year of first entry to their programme.)

Anticipated income from these non standard fees is included in the financial calculations at Annex B.

2.2 Intended full-time equivalent (FTE) tuition fees for new fee-regulated part-time entrants in 2012-13 and 2013-14

The 2013/14 Access Agreement is being written in a transitional period, the University having decided to withdraw the University Foundation Award (UFA) programme for new entrants from 2012/13, following a change in funding regulations which made the programme no longer viable. (Discussions are currently underway with local FECs and Hull City Council around alternative provision). This decision has impacted on anticipated part time fee income reported at Annex B.

³ Applies to UK/EU students and includes the fee for Hull York Medical School (HYMS) MBBS, operated jointly with the University of York. Excludes NHS funded provision

2012/13: Tuition fees for new fee-regulated part time entrants in 2012-13 vary, with a number attracting a £9,000 FTE standard fee.

2013/14: It is anticipated that the majority of part time tuition fees will be brought in line with those charged for full time provision by 2013/14, attracting a £9,000 FTE fee.

The University confirms that, in line with fee regulations, no part-time student will be charged more than £6,750 in an academic year. The University also commits to spend an appropriate proportion of any income from part-time fees above the basic level, on access measures.

2.3 Intended tuition fees for new fee-regulated PG ITT entrants in 2013-14

Intended tuition fee charges for new fee-regulated PG ITT entrants in 2013-14 are £9,000.

2.4 Student Numbers

Annex B gives:

- estimated numbers of full time students at each fee level, (including any with fees at £6,000 and below);
- estimated numbers of regulated part time students for whom we anticipate the fee will exceed £4,500 in 2012/13 and 2013/14 and the resulting estimated fee income above the basic level for full and part time courses.

2.5 Fee Rises

The University may raise fees for 2013/14 entrants in real terms, in line with maximum increases set by government.

3 Expenditure on additional access and retention measures

3.1 Level of expenditure

An assessment of our records in access and retention suggests it is appropriate to continue an overall expenditure of 21.6% of income above basic fees (in line with the overall expenditure agreed in our 2012-13 access agreement covering initial teacher training (ITT) provision). This comprises 22.5% of £6-9k fee income for courses other than PG ITT where the expectation is expenditure of 10% of £6-9k income. We consider all expenditure included is 'countable' for the purposes of this agreement.

3.2 Assessment of access and retention record.

The University meets all its benchmarks around access and is ranked above the national average for all 2012 HESA participation performance indicators with one small exception⁴

⁴ The percentage rate for 'Young FT Other UG entrants (Participation) from specified socio-economic classes' needs to be considered against the small size of the whole group.

It also performs well with regards to retention performance indicators, particularly in terms of first degree entrants (young and mature).⁵

The increase in non continuation rate for young FT First Degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods informs our retention strategy and resulting action plans for 2013/14.

The University is aware of the unknown impact of the introduction of higher fees in 2012 on access and subsequent retention, which may result in amended priorities once 2012 entrant data becomes available.

3.3 Balance of support between financial support and non financial measures

In light of the above the University will, in 2013/14:

- Continue to encourage entry to HE (and the University of Hull in particular) from those in under-represented groups
- Continue to provide financial support to first year entrants from low income backgrounds, (around one third of our entrants)
- Provide ongoing support across the student lifecycle to ensure successful outcomes for this group.

Of the **£5.66M** anticipated institutional spend (excluding the Government NSP allocation) from fee income above the basic fee in 2013.14, **£1M** is proposed for outreach, **£0.85M** for retention and the balance of **£3.81M** for student bursary/scholarship awards.

4 Additional Access Measures

4.1 Outreach

Both campuses are located in areas of high social deprivation and relatively low academic achievement⁶ aspiration and the University continues to expand its work with learners from under-represented groups to raise aspirations and attainment with the potential to enter higher education.

Much of our work takes place in local schools, colleges and communities, where we are working to increase the amount of outreach work delivered in a sustained way with learners over a number of years, starting with primary learners in some areas of Hull. In addition University departments and outreach personnel are increasingly targeting outreach activities on the 47 schools, academies and colleges with high proportions of learners eligible for free school meals (pre-16) or high numbers of learners from low participation neighbourhoods (post 16).

Outreach includes previous Aimhigher type activities (e.g. summer schools, in-school mentoring, master-classes and campus visits), as well as the provision of IAG, particularly in the fields of student finance and careers advice where new staff have been recruited. As part of the January 2012

⁵ Source: HESA Performance Indicators 2012 (2009/2010 Entrants For All Tables Except HESA PI Table T3e – Participation and Non-Continuation

⁶ 26.9% of working age population in Scarborough and 20% of working age population in Hull have a level 4 or above qualification compared to 31.3% nationally. ONS annual population survey. Jan 2010-Dec 2010

WPSA/Access Agreement monitoring return the University obtained information in relation to over 3,400 Year 9 learners attending University days, over 5,800 engaged in educational outreach activities and around 1000 undertaking medical problem based learning, master classes and summer schools.

It is anticipated that period covered by this agreement will also see an increase in outreach work with potential part time learners from under-represented groups but further investigation is needed before this can be implemented.

The University's proposal to spend £1M of anticipated fee income above basic fees in 2013/14 on countable outreach activities compares with previous figures of £50,000 p.a. for the years 2009-2012 and £585,920 for 2012/13.

In 2013/14 the University intends to:

- Maintain and, if possible, expand collaborative outreach provision with other HEIs
- Maintain and where possible expand high impact ex Aimhigher activities
- Maintain funded posts introduced in 2011/12⁷
- Enhance the framework of progressive activities⁸ offered to targeted schools and colleges
- Provide additional commissioned activity to meet identified needs
- Continue to effectively monitor and evaluate all outreach activity
- Improve the visibility of the support available to learners from a Care background
- Adopt an evidence based strategic approach to outreach activity for part time learners

4.2 Collaborative outreach working between HEIs

4.2.1 Excellence Hub

- The University of Hull is one of four HEIs comprising the Yorkshire and Humber Excellence Hub. Current contracts based on activities running until summer 2015 form the basis of one of the Access Agreement targets.

4.2.2 North Yorkshire Coast collaboration

- New collaborative working was launched in 2011/12 between the Universities of Hull, York and York St John to ensure continuation of activity for learners on the North Yorkshire Coast post Aimhigher. The arrangement is co-ordinated from the University of Hull Scarborough campus and 1016 learner experiences in 5 schools have been provided to date (May 2012). Partners have agreed to continue to expand provision in 2012/13 and it is anticipated that 2013/14 may see further developments.

4.2.3 HE in FE

- It is envisaged that 2012/13 and 2013/14 will see the University leading increased outreach collaboration around the 'HE in FE' agenda via its Federation partnership arrangement.

⁷ HE Student Finance Adviser; Pre-entry Careers Advisor; Scarborough outreach worker; University Access Co-ordinator and University Access Administrator

⁸ The 2012 University of Hull Directory of support activities for schools, academies and colleges can be viewed at www.hull.ac.uk/accessoffice

In addition:

- The University is working with 'NorthClass' HEIs, as well as local councils, to assimilate good practice around the visibility of outreach to those from a Care background and it is planned to achieve membership of the Frank Buttle Trust by 2013/14.
- Individual University of Hull staff participate in NEON events to maximise opportunities for update and engagement with WP colleagues across the HE sector.
- The University of Hull is formalising its collaboration with the Hull Children's University, building from a service level agreement signed in 2011/12 to provide activities to primary pupils in schools located in neighbourhoods with significantly low participation.

4.3 Links with schools and colleges

The University of Hull has two formal strategic arrangements to support its links with schools and colleges:

4.3.1 Federation of Colleges

The University of Hull's Federation of Colleges is a partnership of eight HE in FE providers, the University of Hull and Higher York sharing strategic aims of supporting economic development across the Humber Local Economic Partnership and associated Enterprise zones through transforming/increasing opportunities and widening participation in higher education.

It has a particular focus on vocational and work-based learning, supporting learners and employers develop Higher Level Skills. At the heart of the network is the notion of new progression opportunities, backed by a quality assured framework and credit transfer system. This is supported by processes for enhancing curriculum development (focused on priority learning areas), together with a web portal and personalised e-learning environment that offers access to research, advice, information and resource materials.

4.3.2 Associate Institutions Network (AIN)

This pre-HE group of sixth form colleges, FE colleges, schools and academies works jointly with the University of Hull to address social and economic challenges in the region through providing:

- Activities for young people to raise aspiration and awareness of learning opportunities at HE level
- Direct recruitment activities to encourage progression post 16 and to the University itself
- A forum for collaborative debate on pertinent education policy and practice (including around ITT and CPD for teachers)

The AIN has 37 members (May 2012), several of which are key targets for the University in terms of its commitment to provide a learner progression framework of activities, due to their location in areas of significant deprivation and high proportion of learners on free school meals.

4.3.3 Thomas Ferens Academy

The University, in partnership with Wyke and Wilberforce Sixth Form Colleges, has sponsored the new Thomas Ferens' Academy, serving North Hull. The Academy is due to open in September 2012 in newly built premises through the Hull BSF programme.

The University and its co-sponsors will continue to play a key role in its development over the coming years.

4.3.4 Contextual data

The Hull York Medical School Code of Practice on undergraduate Admissions⁹ clarifies that 'the Universities of Hull and York are committed to a programme of widening access' and that 'in its admissions process, HYMS will take account of any evidence of educational disadvantage.'

4.4 Retention and Success

A new Retention Strategy will be considered by the University's Senate in June. As a result of the underpinning work (and informed by the University's involvement in collaborative research with the University of Sunderland and Newcastle University¹⁰), it is anticipated that 2013/14 continued delivery of the recommendations made, ensuring positive outcomes for learners across the student lifecycle.

Key elements with particular relevance to the 2013/14 Access Agreement include:

- The design and delivery of a number of progressive activities and interventions targeted at full and part time learners from under-represented backgrounds (including all those eligible for University bursaries) across the student lifecycle.
- The planned introduction of Academic Support Officers in academic areas with remits to provide additional support and guidance to primarily first year students from WP backgrounds. The posts will assist in the academic transition but also support social integration and will focus on those vulnerable times of the student lifecycle.
- Work to ensure a strategic approach for inclusive teaching practices, with particular focus on suitability for WP cohorts.
- Maximising the amount of financial support available post entry to meet individual needs and minimise withdrawal for reasons of hardship. It is anticipated that this might include supplementing the Access to Learning budget and the provision of financial support towards high placement expenses where applicable.

⁹ http://www.hyms.ac.uk/documents/regulations/ug_cop_undergraduate_admissions.pdf

¹⁰ 'Good practice in student retention: an examination of the effects of student integration on non-completion' (2012) – 'part of the What Works? Student Retention and Success' series. (phf/Hefce/HEA/AoA 2012)

No explicit expenditure for Retention was allocated in the 2009-12 Access Agreements. From a base of £518,600 in 2012/13 the University proposes £853,200 expenditure in 2013/14 on countable retention activities.

4.5 Financial support for students

The University of Hull proposes the following expenditure relating to new entrants in 2013/14:

4.5.1 NSP scholarships to those with Residual Household income of less than £25,000pa:

316 NSP scholarships, with a government contribution of £948,000 have been provisionally allocated by HEFCE

With around one third of our current intake from qualifying under -represented groups the University is particularly concerned to ensure the maximum **number** of Year 1 students are supported to ensure retention and success. As in 2012/13 we therefore propose our allocation of the government's contribution to the National Scholarship Programme be spent on one year £3,000 RHI-dependent bursaries available to those entering full and part time¹¹ programmes where the FTE tuition fee is £9000.

4.5.2 Matched NSP funding

The University has chosen to use its match funding to offer additional £3,000 bursary awards, doubling the **number** of awards available where the standard FTE tuition fee is £9,000 and the individual's RHI is less than £25,000, replicating arrangements for 2012/13.

4.5.3 Breakdown of bursary award

Following requests from our student union, a reduction is proposed in the proportion of the award dedicated to fee waivers for full time students.

For 2013/14 each full time £3,000 bursary will comprise a £1,000 fee waiver and an additional 'credit package' worth £2,000.

Full time students will continue to be offered a **choice** of packages, to ensure that, wherever possible, the bursary meets individual needs most effectively.

In line with government guidance no more than £1,000 of the total award will be offered as cash and as the maintenance element of an award is not available to part time or EU students their award will be in the form of fee waiver.

4.5.4 University of Hull scholarships to those with RHI of less than £25,000

Where bursary eligible entrants offer grades AAB at A level (or equivalent) the bursary will be replaced with a 3 year scholarship worth £9,000 in total, as in 2012/13. Year 1 of the scholarship replicates the Year 1 bursary outlined above with a further £3,000 awarded in Years 2 and 3.

4.5.5 Other financial support - Non NSP fee waivers replaced by further scholarships

¹¹ Part time entrants will receive their 'Year 1 benefits' across 2+ years, matching the first 120 credits of study

At the request of the Student Union, the University proposes to re-allocate 2012/13 expenditure on full fee waivers with further three year scholarships worth £9,000, to those with RHI less than £42,600 who offer grades equivalent to AAB at A level¹². Year 1 of the scholarship would be the same as the Year 1 bursary outlined above with a further £3,000 awarded in Years 2 and 3.

4.6 Student eligibility for awards

In 2013/14 the University of Hull intends to make bursary or scholarship awards to **ALL** 2013/14 entrants who fully meet national AND institutional eligibility criteria.¹³

4.7 Applications for awards

Awards will be made automatically on registration and there is no requirement for applicants/entrants to make application for an award.

The University does not intend to hold back awards for use later in the academic year.

4.8 Queries and appeals

The University recognises the need to ensure queries and appeals relating to NSP and other awards proposed under the Access Agreement are dealt with fairly and will provide clear guidance on processes involved and clear, unambiguous and accessible information on the rules, terms and conditions applicable to awards

5 Targets and milestones

5.1 Changes to targets described in 2012-13 agreements

In light of the statistics presented above and the targets and milestones outlined in the 2012/13 Access Agreement it would seem appropriate for the University of Hull retain the targets agreed for 2012/13 until the outcomes of changes in student behaviour on application rates, particularly from entrants from under-represented groups are known.

We will continue to monitor student uptake of part time programmes and ensure that those eligible have full access to appropriate retention support.

6 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

6.1 Institutional monitoring arrangements

The University of Hull undertakes to monitor compliance with the agreement and progress towards milestones.

Minimum expectations around the collection and analysis of data in relation to OUTREACH and RETENTION activities have been clarified and form the basis for the release of post activity funding for all internal and externally commissioned activity. Data is collected and analysed at a macro level

¹² Full details of AAB and equivalencies will be available on the University website from August 2012

¹³ Full details of national and institutional eligibility criteria for 2013/14 entrants will be available from August 2012 on the University website.

by Access Office personnel, and Student Support Services staff (and potentially Academic Support Officers) and appropriately shared across the University.

6.2 Evaluation

- Dedicated University staff analyse annual HESA data and compare data against application and entry statistics throughout the year to inform the extent to which progress is being made against benchmarks, targets and milestones, providing evidence to management decision making on issues of student access, retention and success.
- Access Office staff provide regularly updated information around target schools and colleges and share this with intending internal and external outreach providers. Subsequently they make judgements about proposed expenditure and negotiate appropriate changes where necessary to ensure both value for money AND effective targeting of learners
- Post delivery evaluation is expected from providers of commissioned activity using learner (and where possible other) perceptions of value. Evaluations are shared with the Access Office to permit an institutional perspective to be gathered.
- Retention activities are evaluated against institutional data and the expectation is that data will be gathered in greater detail as the cohorts work through. Retention issues will become more prominent in our data collection but also in our engagement with students directly.

6.3 Person/Bodies responsible for delivery

The senior person and bodies responsible for delivery of the University of Hull Access Agreement for 2013/14 are Professor Glenn Burgess, PVC Learning and Teaching and the Access Agreement Steering Group commissioned by the University Executive.

6.4 Student Representation on monitoring/evaluation groups

Students are represented on University Council, Senate and relevant University committees via their Hull University Union representatives. In addition from 2012/13 it is intended to formally invite members of the student body to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation processes outlined in 6.2 above.

7 Provision of information to prospective students

The University will provide full information about Fees (including aggregate costs) and the value, operation and criteria for awards (including NSP bursaries) on its website, through its prospectus and via individual communications, in line with the good practice identified in the guidance. Clear signposting will also be provided around the potential impact of certain choices of credit package on state benefits. The University will ensure that the (common) paragraph around NSP eligibility is included in communications with those to which it wishes to make an offer a place on a course of study.

The University intends to test the information to be provided regarding the 2013/14 Access Agreement on existing and potential students in advance of publication, through our relationship with Hull University Union and via focus groups in schools and colleges.

8 Consulting with students

The Hull University Union 2011/12 President and the Union's Chief Executive have been active members of the 2013/14 Access Agreement Working Group contributing both national and local perspectives on the University's proposals and requesting changes to 2012/13 arrangements where they thought it appropriate.

Hull University Union fully supports this proposed Access Agreement.

9 Equality and diversity

In 2011/12, following the publication of the Equality Act 2010 and revised University of Hull Corporate Strategy, equality objectives were produced for faculties and service areas, to underpin the University's corporate equality objectives and embed equality issues in respective areas. Achievement of these objectives is reviewed, updated and reported annually.

A number of these objectives had explicit reference to the University's Access Agreements and Widening Participation Strategic Assessments (AA/WPSA) e.g.

“establish an Access Office to ensure (inter alia) processes are in place to fairly administer bursary and scholarship schemes under the University's 2012 AA”

Others impact on the achievement of milestones and targets within AA/WPSA e.g.

“implement mechanisms to increase the retention and improve achievement in students with a disability over 4 years” – Faculty objective

or focus on ensuring success at different stages of the student lifecycle

“ensure the Careers Service supports those students who may face additional barriers in accessing careers support and in entering the labour market by providing targeted support”.

Ensuring ALL eligible full and part time entrants receive a bursary award and removing a limited number of full fee waiver scholarships are also indicative of the University's desire to ensure equality issues are appropriately considered in designing access plans for 2013/14.

