



UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

ACCESS AGREEMENT

2015-16 Entrants

(as at June 2014)

These Access Agreement proposals are based on information and guidance available in April 2014. 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 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 recruitment and achievement dimensions of the University's approach to Widening Participation (recruitment and achievement) are 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 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 new Schools Engagement Strategy.
- 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 2015-16 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 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 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 2015-16 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 2014 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 2012-13 (to be published next month) has improved again, and we expect to meet our benchmark, notwithstanding the increasingly 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:

Outreach (pre-entry) measures	
Delivery of a new Schools Engagement Strategy	<p>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 membership 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 plan to sponsor a further 25 academies by the end of 2014-15.</p> <p>We have formed a strategic partnership – the Church of England Central Education Trust – with the Dioceses of Lichfield and Birmingham – to secure high standards in 250 church schools.</p>
Development and delivery of distributed learning centres	<p>In partnership with other public and private providers, we are planning to develop HE centres (including teaching delivery, IAG and student support) in a range of different geographical locations. We expect the availability of more local provision and support to be of particular value to part-time and mature students.</p>
Delivering high quality school improvement services through the University's Social Enterprise company – Education Central	<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>'Student Gateway' – outreach and advice services.</p>	<p>The Gateway offers an accessible 'shop window' providing advice on access to the University. It also delivers our outreach work e.g. collaboratively with North West Midlands AimHigher (Harper Adams, Keele and Staffordshire Universities); Children's University activities;</p>
<p>Science activities associated with the launch of our new Science Centre (due to open in summer 2014).</p>	<p>Building on our annual 'SciFest' programme, our new £20m science building incorporates a showcase facility to introduce primary and secondary school pupils, and FE college students, to Science outside the school environment.</p>
<p>Reduced part-time tuition fees.</p>	
<p>Retention, attainment and employability measures</p>	
<p>BME attainment projects</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Employing graduate interns to deliver a range of support and advice services to existing students.</p>	<p>We currently employ 40 graduate interns in a range of roles supporting student engagement and achievement.</p>
<p>Reducing additional charges to students on courses with specific additional costs.</p>	<p>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).</p>
<p>Provision for students previously supported by the DSA.</p>	<p>We will develop options to provide alternative support to students no longer eligible for DSA support.</p>
<p>Hardship funds</p>	<p>We will maintain the level of financial support for students previously earmarked as the Access to Learning Fund.</p>
<p>'Skills for Learning' support provided in Learning Centres.</p>	
<p>A range of 'Employability' initiatives delivered under the University's Enterprise and Employability sub-Strategy:</p>	<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. We act as regional co-ordinators for the West Midlands STEP programme; we have one of the</p>

	highest number 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.
Volunteering Bureau	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 the pattern from 2014-15 reflecting four key developments, endorsed by our Board of Governors:

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, a new School Engagement Strategy has been developed, which envisages holistic and joined-up engagement with academies, trusts and schools, encompassing the work of our social enterprise Education Central, our own outreach, and direct provision of, and wider support for, teacher training. This 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.

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.

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.

Partnership Scholarships

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

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 2015; 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 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.
- 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 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).

Projects in this Access Agreement which have emerged from the KPI review framework include the BME attainment projects, which constitutes part of the national HEA/Paul Hamlyn Foundation 'What Works' programme, and our new School Engagement Strategy, which draws on the example of the University of the West of England highlighted in the National Strategy for Access and Student Success in HE, published by DBIS in April 2014.

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 2015-16
- Information on Fees/Scholarships 2015-16 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 2015-16 '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 2014-15 academic year.
- Improved information for mature applicants.

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 grow its student body while retaining its existing excellent widening participation profile, and to continue to improve student outcomes, especially for BME students.

Access agreement 2015-16 resource plan (submission 1st May 2014)
(Table 7) Targets and milestones

Institution name: University of Wolverhampton

Institution UKPRN: 10007166

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

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)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	HESA T1b - State School (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Maintain above benchmark profile	No	2009-10	98.9	98	98	98	98		09-10 benchmark was 96.5%
2	HESA T1b - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Maintain above benchmark profile	No	2009-10	49.1	49	49	49	49		09-10 benchmark was 39.4%
3	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Maintain above benchmark profile	No	2009-10	23.1	23	23	23	23		09-10 benchmark was 14.6%
4	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	2009-10	10.1	8.5	8	8	8		09-10 benchmark was 9.6%
5	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	2009-10	15.5	14	13.5	13	13		09-10 benchmark was 13.8%
6	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (All, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	2009-10	12	11	10.5	10	10		09-10 benchmark was 11.1%
7	HESA T3b - No longer in HE after 1 year & in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Better than benchmark	No	2009-10	11.8	11.2	11	10.8	10.5		09-10 benchmark was 10.8%
8	HESA T5 - Projected degree (full-time, first degree entrants)	Improve % projected to complete 1st degree to benchmark	No	2009-10	71.6	72.7	73	73.4	73.5		09-10 benchmark was 73.4%
9	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Increase % of first degree 1st and 2:1's to UK average	No	2009-10	49.3	55	56	58	58		09-10 UK average was 58.1%
10	Other statistic - Other (please give details in the next column)	Maintain DLHE Employed or Further Study above benchmark and improve to UK average.	No	2008-09	87.8	90	90	91	91		08-09 benchmark was 87.3% UK average 89.9%
11	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Maintain BME recruitment profile at or above TDA target of 18%.	No	2010-11	18%	18%	18%	18%	18		
12	Other statistic - Postgraduate (please give details in the next column)	Maintain recruitment from first generation in HE entrants at or above 50%.	No	2010-11	50%	50%	50%	50%	50		
13	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	2010-11	4%	5.5%	6%	6.5%	7		2010-11 benchmark was 6.4%. England average was 5.4%
14	Other statistic - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Increase the % of BME graduates achieving 1st or 2.1	No	2010-11	37%	45%	47%	50%	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.

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)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1											
2											
3											

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.

Please note that our DSA related target will need to be updated when the changes to eligibility criteria announced in March 2014 have been worked through and the HESA PI amended.