



# **Access Agreement**

2014-15

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### Students' Union consultation

In drawing up our Access Agreement we consulted extensively with the Students' Union (SU). This consultation occurred at a meeting of the Student's Union Executive Committee. The discussion at that meeting is summarised in the paragraphs below.

*The Students' Union believe that having an access agreement that contained a support package that, as only available to those students who are living in a house, with a household income of £1,000 or below, isn't realistic as we believe that it isn't really feasible to run a house on this amount of money.*

*Re-instating the student, with a tie sheet, could be helpful but it, as noted that those, with a household income of £1,000 and below, will be receiving the same level of support, as suggested the idea that introducing an intermediate band, could be beneficial.*

*The evening also a detailed discussion about the situation, where those students have identical household incomes, with some households having no ability to provide additional funds, whereas another are being one or other of the above, has not been classified as being so the household is a Students' Union, encourage our students to take the*

Chichester has grown from a small college established in 1839 as a major intervention in the education of the working community into a successful modern university.

Located on the deprived coastal strip of West Sussex and South-East Hampshire and surrounded by underdeveloped rural hinterland, we recruit from some of the poorest areas in the country and we are now amongst the most successful institutions for the recruitment and retention of students from low-participation areas.

Currently 54% of our student body are from households with an income of less than £42,000 and 49% of our students have told us they are the first generation of their families to enter higher education. We achieved our SNC and maintained our strong recruitment of AAB+ equivalent students.

# 1. Student finance

## **Tuition fees**

We continue to propose charging £8,500 per year to Home and EU students on full-time undergraduate programmes, including ITT courses.

Sandwich year fees will be £1,275 for 2014/15.

We will be charging £1,065 per module to part-time students. No student will undertake more than six modules in any academic year, therefore the annual maximum is £6,390.

Home students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds will continue to receive a support package that reduces the tuition fee to just above £6,000, if they opt for a fee waiver.

Home students studying on University of Chichester courses at Platform One are covered by these provisions.

University of Chichester courses at the Isle of Wight College are charged at £6,000 and our student support package is not applicable for students registered on these courses.

## **Tuition fees and student support package**

Based on the current profile of students our average fee will be £7,743 in 2014/15 across all years.

The expenditure on our student support package amounts to 72.5% of additional fee income.

## **Support package**

Our intention is that students will have the choice about whether they use part of their support package funding to reduce their long-term loans or whether to take the funding as cash (effectively as a maintenance bursary) to help them with living expenses.

The rationale for this decision is our commitment to the student experience, a core element of which is empowering the individual student to make the choice appropriate for them. For those students and families who are concerned about the burden of a long-term debt, the package will act as a fee waiver. For those concerned about the day-to-day affordability, it will act as a maintenance bursary. It is our firm belief that this bursary support is one of the reasons why our recruitment remained firm, not because it is a recruitment tool that students use as a determiner in university choice, but rather that it removes the fear from those non-traditional students that finance is a barrier. We also believe that is a powerful retention measure and one that will aid the attainment of non-traditional students as they are financially supported. For further information relating to our evaluation of bursary support please see section 8.

Our expenditure on fee waivers and bursaries for new and continuing students in 2014/15 will be £5,396,000.

The outline of the support package is detailed beneath:

- Students with a household income<sup>1</sup> of £25,000 or less would be entitled to receive £1,325 as a fee waiver and £1,000 may be claimed as a further fee waiver or a cash bursary.
- Students with a household income of £25,000 to £42,000 would be entitled to receive a cash bursary of £1,000.

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- Care Leavers would receive an additional £1,000 as either a bursary or a fee waiver
- A student will be entitled to change the nature of their package at the beginning of each academic year. If the bursary option is selected this will be paid in three instalments during the academic year.

### **National Scholarship Programme (NSP)**

Students who are eligible and opt to participate in the NSP will receive a total financial package worth £6,650. Eligibility is based upon first degree (ie new entrants to higher education) followed by lowest household income on an

### **Student Money Advice**

Students who have concerns about their finances will be able to seek advice from the University's Student Money Advice Service (SMAS). The SMAS will provide information about the financial support available from the government, forms of financial support available from the University, as well as other independent bodies. Budgeting advice is also available to help students manage their finances as wisely as possible.

Any students unsure of who to speak to regarding any issue they may have, are advised to contact their student adviser or one of our student money advisers (available on both campuses), who will be able to put them in touch with the right service both within student support services and across the University as a whole.

## 2. Expenditure on access measures

We are committed to ensuring that money is not a real, or perceived, barrier to participation. We are equally committed to making sure that studying at university remains about the ability to learn. This is why our expenditure is focused on student support, out-reach activity and retention.

Forecast Outreach and Retention Expenditure	2014/15
Standing budget	16,626
Outreach Expenditure	1,251
Retention Expenditure	1,553
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,430</b>

This is an increase of 32.8 % since our first Access Agreement.

# 3. Outreach

Our outreach activity encompasses all of the Sussex and south east Hampshire regional community.

A weighted combination of the following data have been used to create a list of 30 schools and colleges with whom we have formal partnerships since 2011: POLAR, Employment Support and Training (EST), CVA, and Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). Following the release of Polar3, we will re-assess our local and regional schools and will form new partnerships where appropriate.

In addition to these schools and colleges we have continued to work with all our local schools and colleges, focussing on cohorts drawn from a combination of first-generation and low-income households, as well as the AimHigher schools and colleges for which we were previously the lead HEI and did not form part of our target 30.

In total, we will continue to undertake access and outreach work in more than 50 schools and colleges; this will now begin in Year 9, rather than in Year 7, in order that we can utilise the unique learner number and more effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of our activities.

## Learner Progression Framework (LPF)

Listening to our partner schools and colleges, we have devised the Learner Progression Framework (LPF) to consolidate our work year on year. Our school and college partners have indicated critical success factors to date as being an increase in:

- Students' self confidence
- Awareness of opportunities
- Students entering further education
- Attendance

Partner schools can:

- Participate fully in all elements of the framework
- Work with us to devise a coherent programme, drawn from the LPF that meets their needs

The provision is revised constantly through post-event evaluations from students, teachers, parents and ambassadors with new interventions



## Supporting progress - Years 9 – 11

### Standalone inspiration events

#### **ChiRocks**

Targeted at songwriters, vocalists and musicians from across our WP target schools, this is a three-day summer school project run by the University's Music Department and the Widening Participation team. Eighty pupils spend three days working with musicians, business studies advisors, to produce a record and stage a live concert, as well as pitching ideas h



## Explaining Student Finance

The University recognises the importance of providing prospective students, their parents/carers and teachers with information on Student Finance in a relevant and impartial manner.

We undertake this work in all our colleges through specific student finance workshops and information events for all of these groups. These are impartial events that, through practical and illustrated examples, steer all participants through the intricacies of the student finance system in a clear transparent and impartial way.

Additionally, our Widening Participation and Student Recruitment Teams distribute the Thinking of going to university leaflet produced by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), as well as the You can afford to go to uni poster and leaflet produced by the Independent Taskforce on Student Finance, at our events and intervention in schools and colleges.

As a University we ensure that our prospectus is published with a clear explanation of the student finance and support system as well as information on our support package. This information is supported by specific information that is direct mailed to both applicants, as well as a specific parents/carers finance mailing.

Student Finance is included in presentations at all Open and Taster Days, including our targeted Mature and Part Time student awareness evenings, and this work will continue. Furthermore, the University has specialist Student Money Advisors who are present at Open Days and who can be contacted by prospective students for advice about the student finance system operates; this service is advertised in our prospectus and other materials.

### E-mentoring

Our Student Ambassadors are pivotal to all our outreach activities, whether in school, in the community or on campus. Where possible, we like Ambassadors to revisit their previous schools and colleges and become peer mentors, therefore practically demonstrating that progression to HE is an achievable goal. To further enhance this personal level of engagement we have introduced an e-mentoring across Years 12-13 in a number of pilot colleges. We have also taken advantage of the e-mentoring platform to introduce dedicated careers, employability and options resource forum to students in our target schools who are currently in Year 9; the interactions with the resources are also facilitated by a link Ambassador who either attended that school.

### **Support for parents/carers**

To complement the information, advice and guidance that students receive as part of the LPF we have devised the following support specifically for parents/carers:

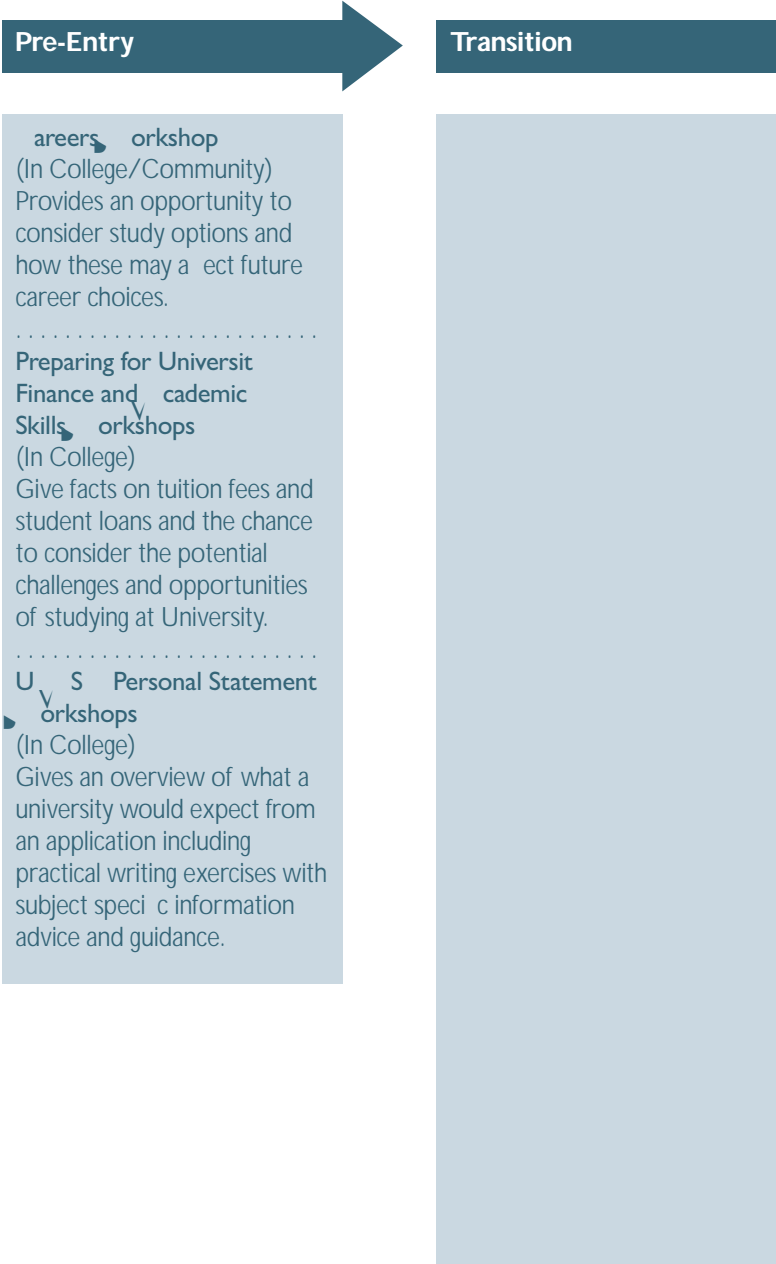
- Parents' evening briefings
- Information, Advice and Guidance sessions and materials
- Campus visits
- UCAS parent workshops
- Parent/Carer student finance events

We believe these specific sessions encourage dialogue about progression routes between parents/carers and their children and gives parents the confidence and skills to support their child through the myriad of choices and decisions.

### **Encouraging care leavers into higher education**

The University sits on the board of a pan-Sussex Care Leavers Group in order to sustain the collaborative approach adopted by FE and HE institutions in this area of work. In addition our WVP Team ensures the following raises the agenda of care leavers entering Further and Higher education:

- In collaboration with the relevant local authorities we offer taster days and on-campus activities to care leavers across the region.
- Whilst planning our work with our target schools and colleges, we encourage the schools to ensure that at



**16-25 NEET sport for social change project**

The 16-25 NEET sport engagement project is aimed at encouraging and re-equipping young people to participate in education, training and employment using sport as a tool for social change in a three-stage process. The aim is to harness the personal development skills and self-confidence acquired through sport in order to engage the participants. Once engaged participants are then supported to become trained and qualified sports makers, mentors and coaches and undertake paid and volunteer work in their local community. As part of this three-stage process, participants will also access academic skills advice, careers and employability support and be supported back into education in a post-16 environment where we have involvement, see page 12. This project is a result of a successful small-scale pilot project in 2012/13 that saw the University, in partnership with a local charity, working with a cohort of young people from Bognor Regis. In 2013/14 we will expand this project to encompass a cohort of 60 young people and are in discussions with our county sport partnership over formal involvement. Subject to academic-led evaluation of impact and an assessment of capacity, this project will see a further expansion in 2014/15.

# 4. Academic attainment in schools and colleges

Raising aspiration and providing impartial, clear advice to those who are first generation or from backgrounds where there is historic low participation is imperative. Equally important, however, is supporting attainment and progression in schools and FE.

Historically we have always supported schools and colleges through the activities described below.

## SE support sessions

Student Ambassadors support students in school with subjects such as maths and English. This one-to-one guidance gives students confidence and helps to raise grades and potential. A customised approach and liaison with subject class teachers ensures effective cohesion between students and their Ambassador.

## Learning Performance seminars

The on-campus study and thinking skills seminars are led by the external learning experts 'Learning Performance'. This introduces students to a range of thinking skills that will enable them to solve problems effectively and think more independently. Using analytical skills, students will be able to write better essays, gain a deeper understanding of subject issues, plan ahead more effectively and be more confident in studies with a potential to raise their grades.

The concept of the two pilot programmes outlined below is to provide a meaningful and longer term engagement with the university that is focussed on academic knowledge that enables attainment and progression. It is also intended to take the university into the classroom and further demystify higher education.

## Study and revision pilot programmes in schools

It is our intention moving forwards to offer curriculum-focussed GCSE and BTEC study and revision programmes which can take place in school or on our campus. Initially, this will start as small-scale pilot and be subject to qualitative and quantitative evaluation involving schools, pupils and delivery partners.

## College-based embedded study pilot

Building upon small-scale work already taking place both in our academic departments, as well as through our multi-subject taster days, it is our intention to work with colleges to embed university-style learning experiences into some modules of subjects in our target colleges. Initially this will start as small-scale pilot and be subject to qualitative and quantitative evaluation involving the colleges and students, an examination of the progression data, monitoring of academic attainment on entry and during the lifecycle of the student.

# Support for our students

Supporting transition to and through HE is a critical part of students from VWP backgrounds. Most students cope very well and manage the series of steps they face; however, for some the challenges they meet become insurmountable barriers. The greater the number of factors to be overcome, potentially the more likely a student is of withdrawing from their programme. We have a number of support mechanisms in place to support transition, retention and successful completion and attainment.

## Transition

efreshers week

We are aware that, for our target students, the first semester will be both an exciting, daunting and challenging

# Graduate destinations

In excess of 50% of our students are from households where income is less than £42,000 so we understand the importance of ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills and experiences to be able to fully exploit their journey into higher education and gain employment in graduate-level jobs.

Many of our programmes have embedded work placements, links with employers, industry accreditations, as well as sector-specific employability and enterprise modules. We also have a start-up enterprise module that is run by the School of Enterprise, Management and Leadership that is available to all students who wish to launch their own business at the end of their studies.

To support effective transition to the labour market, in we have invested in a progressive work experience package tailored both to students' courses and their career aspirations on graduation that will launch in 2013/14. This builds upon the existing services and support of our Careers Service.

This aims to ensure that students will graduate with:

- a good quality up-to-date CV
- interview preparation
- identifying transferable skills
- workplace skills
- substantive relevant work experience
- experience of a recruitment process

Our commitment is to make sure that students and graduates from all disciplines who register on the programme, and successfully complete the necessary preparation, have the opportunity to apply for an expanded programme of carefully matched short and longer term internships with employers.

## **Postgraduate support**

Transition to postgraduate study for students from LPNs has been as much a barrier as progression to HE in the first instance. In recognition of this, the University has developed the following support package for our graduates.

- Awareness raising sessions about postgraduate study
- Postgraduate taster sessions



# 7. Collaboration

The overriding principle of the students' experience is key and it is this that guides our approach to collaborative working with schools, colleges and other universities.

## Schools and colleges

Teachers, FE staff and careers advisors are the key influencers when it comes to supporting young people into further and higher education. The WIP team aims to offer support to teachers and careers advisers in our partner schools and colleges with a range of focussed activities.

- A series of inset training sessions
- Programme specific training to individuals or groups of teachers
- UCAS processes
- Student Finance system
- Annual conference for partner schools, teachers and staff involved in widening participation
- Provision of relevant information, advice and guidance that can be used to explain the options available to students

## Access Co-ordinators Forum

As with all successful collaborative activities we recognise the fact that effective partnerships and dialogue are key. The bi-annual Access Co-ordinators Forum hosted by the University keeps key stakeholders informed of latest developments in Higher Education with a particular focus on supporting mature learners. It also provides the Co-ordinators the opportunity to explore with us barriers and ideas they have for improving access.

## Universities

There is already a commitment between ourselves, Sussex and Brighton universities, who have historically worked alongside each other as part of the AimHigher initiative, to:

- Continue the HEI forum of collaborative partnership working
- Support the Pan-Sussex Care Leavers group that is managed and facilitated by Work & Learning Opportunities, a community interest company run by the former AimHigher Sussex Director.

In collaboration with other South East universities, we will be continuing to fund the existing HEAT database in order that we can monitor and evaluate the impact of our activities, as a group of HEIs, upon a common geographic area.

## Knowledge & change

In line with our commitment to the collaborative sharing of best practice within the field of Widening Participation, we will continue to contribute to UK, European and International knowledge exchange and research conferences. In the UK we are active members of NEON and have been invited to join the Laser Awards' Access Quality and Development Committee. In Europe we will build upon our links with Sweden and the European Access Network (EAN), whilst there will be on-going collaboration with Australia, where we have active relationships.

### The University as an Academy Sponsor

Our success in demystifying higher education and reducing the barriers towards attending university has involved active engagement with schools and colleges over many years. As an academy sponsor we are now, through the vehicle of the Chichester Academy Trust (CAT), able to make a systemic intervention in the education and attainment outcomes of pupils in schools and colleges.

CAT aspires to be a Multi-Academy Trust of about 30-40 eclectic, cross-phase family of schools with the common aim of continuous school improvement through challenge, collaboration and support. Embedded into CAT's core service provision is a commitment for our academies to raise aspirations and widen participation and progression to FE and HE.

Our Learner Progression Framework will form the cornerstone of this approach and it is envisaged that in our primary and junior schools a key plank of our work will be the inclusion of our *Learning to Succeed* project. This is an existing project that, whilst successful in terms of participation and qualitative feedback, has proved more

# Monitoring and evaluation

We have detailed action plans for both monitoring and evaluation which are designed to focus on the effectiveness of any outreach work in terms of: activities, progression to FE and HE, transition and success within the University, and employment upon exit.

## Activity monitoring

All students /teaching staff and student ambassadors complete post event questionnaires. Post-event analysis using

### LSE research project *Effectiveness of Higher Education*

As a university we have a longstanding commitment to provide bursaries to our students with household incomes of less than £42,000. We accept that the research data available for measuring the impact of this approach within the HE sector as a whole is currently limited. As such, we are participating in research project led by LSE that aims to examine the effectiveness of bursaries in Higher Education. In addition to the national-level report of findings, the output of this project will provide us with an individualised report, looking at the correlation between bursaries and drop-out rates, test scores and degree classification at a university and departmental level. An outline of the project is provided beneath.

The project aims to investigate the effectiveness of student higher-education bursaries. Universities currently spend around £300m on bursaries per year, but there is no empirical evidence to support their effectiveness. One study by UCAS showed that they had no impact on participation, but was unable to investigate whether they are a useful tool to support students throughout their careers. The project therefore aims to investigate whether bursaries are a useful tool to support students throughout their studies by increasing their annual test scores, reducing drop-out rates and improving final degree classification. In order to investigate this, it is necessary to analyse student-level data, linking the value of the bursary each individual receives with their degree performance, including test scores and final degree outcomes.

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