



UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

ACCESS AGREEMENT 2017/18

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Access Agreement assumes that HEFCE Student Opportunity Funding is reduced by 50% by 2017/18. It assumes that other HEFCE teaching funding will be maintained at current rates in 2017/18 and that maximum tuition fees will rise to £9,250. If further significant changes are made by the Government or HEFCE, we reserve the right to amend this Access Agreement.

Our commitment

The University of Portsmouth's commitment to widening participation is reaffirmed in our new Strategy 2015-2020 which confirms our ongoing commitment to inclusivity and improving social mobility through raising expectations and creating ladders of opportunity for people to take part in higher education. Our Equality Objectives define our objectives in relation to students, staff and the wider community. The specific objectives and milestones in this Access Agreement link back to our Equality Scheme Objectives and to University Strategy. Through our proactive aspiration-raising work, fair admissions policies and excellent support for students on programme and into employment and further study, we aim to promote opportunity and achievement in higher education, bringing life-changing benefits to individuals, their families and the wider community.

Our context

Portsmouth continues to be a city with areas of significant deprivation and educational under-achievement. Our commitment to aspiration-raising and widening participation is essential to the University's future success and viability, and to that of the City. The latest HESA performance indicators, published in March 2016, show our success against the key performance indicators selected in this Access Agreement. We continue to outperform locally-adjusted benchmarks for each of our four main indicators, demonstrating our success in recruiting and retaining young and mature students from low participation neighbourhoods.

Our approach

We will charge a full-time undergraduate fee of £9,250 in 2017/18. We are making changes to the deployment of additional fee income from 2017/18, in accordance with OFFA guidance. This refocusing will ensure we continue to proactively support recruitment and retention of widening participation students, despite reductions in associated HEFCE funding. Major investment in bursaries and a substantial hardship fund will continue to ensure that students who can benefit from higher education are not prevented from attending or continuing due to financial hardship.

Our activities

Our broader plans in respect of widening participation include introducing new routes into HE through Degree Apprenticeships; building stronger progression links with local school and College partners; and sponsorship of a University Technical College to promote opportunities for the local population to progress to HE. We deliver an ambitious outreach programme, focused on raising aspirations and attainment in our target groups. Our commitment to widening participation is built into our Admissions processes, with sensitive use of contextual data and acceptance of a broad range of entry qualifications. We offer a strong financial support package and provide comprehensive financial advice to applicants and their families and to our undergraduates. Tailored support is available to priority groups including care leavers and applicants with disabilities.

Our evaluation

Our investment in outreach and financial support means the University has successfully recruited to target since the new fee regime was introduced. We have spent at or above the level planned in our Access Agreement each year on fee waivers and bursaries. We will continue to monitor and evaluate our activities, to ensure that expenditure and energy is committed effectively to achieve our widening access ambitions.

1. TUITION FEES 2017/18

1.1 Purpose

This Access Agreement sets out the University of Portsmouth's fee levels and financial support for UK/EU full-time undergraduate and PGCE students in 2017/18. Information about how to apply for financial support will be available through the University's website www.port.ac.uk

1.2 Tuition fees for new students

1.2.1 Tuition fees for new and continuing UK/EU full-time undergraduate, PGCE and Master of Architecture students in 2017/18

For this purpose, 'undergraduates' are students studying towards a First Degree, Foundation Degree, HE Certificate, HE Diploma, HND or equivalent. MEng, MPharm, the Master of Architecture and PGCE courses are also classed as undergraduate for this purpose.

Courses	Tuition fee 2017/18	Estimated 2017/18 entrants
All undergraduate courses unless specified below	£9,250	4725
Franchised courses at South Downs College and the Isle of Wight College ¹	£6,165	35
Sandwich year out	£925	0
Language year abroad	£925	0
Erasmus year out	£925	0
All PGCE courses including School Direct	£9,250	120

1.2.2 Tuition fees for previously full-cost courses

The University runs a number of full-time undergraduate courses which were NHS commissioned under previous arrangements. Due to Government changes, new entrants to the following courses come within the scope of this Access Agreement, with standard tuition fees and bursary arrangements from 2017/18 onwards:

- BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography
- BSc (Hons) Therapeutic Radiography
- CertHE Dental Nursing
- DipHE Operating Department Practice
- BN (Hons) Nursing (Adult)

This course will continue to be NHS commissioned, with different fee and bursary arrangements for new entrants in 2017/18:

- BSc (Hons) Dental Hygiene & Dental Therapy

¹ Except students continuing from 2016/17 or earlier at South Downs College, where the fee will remain £6,000

1.2.3 Tuition fees for part-time courses

Our part-time undergraduate courses are outside the scope of this Access Agreement, as our annual fees are below £6,165 per FTE pro rata to credit studied.

1.2.4 Tuition fees for 2018/19 onwards

We expect the £9,250 maximum fee to be increased by the Government in 2018/19 and later years. Tuition fees for both new students and continuing students will be increased at the rate determined by the Government and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

1.3 Students covered by these fees

1.3.1 New full-time students in 2017/18

These fees will apply to all UK/EU new entrants to HEFCE, School Direct and National College for Teaching and Leadership supported full-time undergraduate and PGCE courses in 2017/18. These fees will apply if students enter the first year of an undergraduate course or if they enter direct to Year 2 or later, unless they are transferring or progressing from another undergraduate course and are classed as continuing under the old fee regime by the Student Loans Company (SLC).

1.3.2 Continuing full-time students from before 2017/18

Students who started full-time undergraduate and PGCE courses before 2017/18 are covered by the University's Access Agreements for the relevant years and by tuition fees for 2017/18 defined in this Access Agreement. This is in line with statements regarding increases in maximum tuition fees in the sector in each of our Access Agreements since 2012/13.

Due to the removal of the Government's National Scholarship Programme, bursary arrangements from 2015/16 onwards vary depending on the year students started their course and are defined in the relevant Access Agreement.

1.3.3 Continuing students covered by 'old regime' fees

Students continuing on a full-time undergraduate course who started before 1 September 2012 will pay fees at the subsidised 'old regime' rate set by BIS in 2017/18, provided they are classed as 'continuing students' under this regime by the SLC.

2. STRATEGIC FOCUS & PERFORMANCE

2.1 Our Strategy

Widening participation in Higher Education continues to be a key strategic aim for the University of Portsmouth, as highlighted through our University Strategy 2015-2020; which states our commitment to “raising expectations and creating ladders of opportunity for people in our region to take part in higher education”.

Our Education Strategy to 2020 places a strong focus on student retention and employment and highlights our vision to enhance educational aspirations and create high-quality, relevant, lifelong education opportunities through working in partnership, including with schools, colleges, employers and alumni.

Our strategic ambitions against this principle are as follows:

- We will make a positive, clear and significant contribution to encouraging, extending, and sustaining the engagement of learners, and to inspiring and enabling their access to and success in higher education;
- We will continue and extend our commitment to a partnership approach to outreach activities and our role in raising educational aspirations in our region;
- We will develop, promote and deliver a broader and more flexible range of routes for entry to the University, both for individuals and via strategic partnerships with educational institutions and employers, regionally, nationally and internationally;
- We will develop a variety of flexible learning programmes in partnership with employers and, where appropriate, professional and statutory bodies, as a means to both grow and diversify our student community;
- We will develop and deliver an enhanced offer of continuous and flexible professional development courses, including named awards through credit accumulation.

Current initiatives that will contribute to widening participation include the planned appointment of an Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education Partnerships who will focus on establishing feeder routes from local schools and colleges in to the University; and new provision including apprenticeships, more flexible programmes that suit the needs of mature students and other changes to our range of programmes to broaden their appeal.

2.2 Overview of Performance with Access Agreement Targets

The measures we first introduced in our Access Agreement 2012/13 have been broadly successful. We successfully recruited to our HEFCE Student Number Control (SNC) in 2012/13 to 2014/15 and also recruited AAB+ and equivalent students to our baseline number removed from the SNC by HEFCE; we recruited to internal targets following the removal of the student number cap in 2015/16. We have spent at the levels planned in our Access Agreement on fee waivers and bursaries since 2012/13.

The most recent HESA performance indicators for 2014/15 (published in March 2016) show that the University has continued to perform well against our high-level access agreement targets for the recruitment and retention of young and mature students.

2.3 Review and refocusing of Access Expenditure and Impact

As recommended by OFFA, we are undertaking a thorough review of our current activity and its impact across the student lifecycle, utilising our improved business intelligence capabilities to facilitate an evidence-based approach.

We expect this wide-ranging review to inform how our expenditure is directed, with a greater focus of resource on those activities which have the greatest impact on the recruitment and retention of target students. Within this review we will take account of anticipated reductions in HEFCE Student Opportunity Funding from 2017/18. Following guidance from OFFA we will reduce our expenditure on student bursaries and reallocate this financial resource to essential activities to support recruitment, attainment and progression of widening participation students. Section 7 includes information on our evaluation of financial support.

We have already identified significant challenges relating to student retention where, whilst our overall position is reasonably strong, there is evidence of variations between retention rates for different groups of students, for example lower retention rates for mature, disabled and specific black and minority ethnic (BME) student groups. Strategic investments are already underway to address this, including the appointment of additional Learning Support Tutors in areas with identified retention issues.

We plan to undertake a major evaluation of our educational liaison and outreach activities to ensure that these are delivered as effectively as possible. This will include an evidence-based assessment of the impact of different types of activities, including current and potential partnerships with local schools and colleges.

3. ACCESS MEASURES

3.1 Widening participation profile

Widening participation in higher education is a key strategic aim for the University of Portsmouth, demonstrated by our success to date in recruiting and retaining a diverse student body. Using HESA performance indicators as an objective measure, we have a track record of recruiting close to or above the location adjusted benchmark for the proportion of students from state schools, from social classes 4-7, and young and mature entrants from low participation neighbourhoods. We also perform well in terms of student retention, with non-continuation rates consistently better than benchmark in recent years.

HESA performance indicators for 2014/15, published in March 2016, show that the University has continued to outperform key targets for recruitment of young and mature students from low participation neighbourhoods included in our Access Agreements for 2012/13 onwards (HESA PIs Tables T1a and T2a).

Our retention rates for young students from low participation neighbourhoods in 2013/14 remained at the same level as last year and continue to perform better than benchmark (HESA PIs Table 3b). Retention rates of mature full-time students have also improved since last year, remaining significantly better than benchmark for this indicator. We will continue to monitor our performance against annual benchmarks provided through the HESA performance indicators.

Further improvement of retention rates and promoting successful outcomes for our widening participation students continue to be key priorities for the University.

3.2 Planned investment in aspiration-raising and outreach

In our Access Agreements since 2012/13 we have committed to invest in a range of aspiration-raising and widening access activities, building on our previous collaborative work through AimHigher. Our performance over this period provides evidence of our success in continuing to recruit substantial numbers of students from low income families at planned levels, despite the increased tuition fees.

We will continue to invest in and develop those activities which are shown to deliver significant benefit in widening access to Higher Education, drawing on the data available to us to ensure that available resource is being used effectively with maximum impact.

Investment in aspiration-raising and outreach activities for 2017/18 reflects this commitment, with £2.45 million planned expenditure through this Access Agreement.

3.3 Aspiration raising and attainment

The University of Portsmouth is situated in an area with a historically low continuation rate into higher education. Progression to HE is under 26% in much of our local area, with progression from some local wards as low as 8% (HEFCE POLAR3 data). Hence, our commitment to widening participation has a strong focus on raising aspirations and awareness of higher education.

Our strategy for outreach aligns with the Office for Fair Access Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020 and the National strategy for Access and Student Success (NSASS). We deliver a coherent, incremental and progressively intensive progression package, from Year 5 to Year 13, which systematically develops interest in and motivation towards higher education. Central to this is the maintenance of successful and sustained partnerships with schools and colleges. All of our widening participation work is targeted at institutions and/or young people where progression to higher education is low, deprivation is high or where there are significant proportions of under-represented groups continuing to further or higher education.

We work with local children in Year 5 and Year 6 with the aim of changing their perceptions, and their families' views, about the importance and accessibility of higher education. In line with the NSASS, we have chosen to maintain investment in early intervention and our work with primary schools has been cited as an example of good practice within the national strategy. Aspiration-raising is essential in a city with Portsmouth's history of comparative educational under-achievement and exceptionally low progression rates to HE in some areas.

At secondary level and beyond our focus is on continuing to raise aspirations, combined with collaborative work with schools, aimed at improving attainment. The proportion of 16 year olds in Portsmouth gaining five GCSEs has historically been low (in 2015 Portsmouth was in the bottom 24 of the league table of 151 Local Authorities – for attainment of five GCSE at A-C including Maths and English). By working with target schools to improve this, we aim to make progression to post-16 education and on to higher education a viable option for more local children. In addition to activities provided by our Education Liaison and Outreach Team, our academic departments run a range of subject-focused conferences and workshops for our target schools and colleges. As well as supporting attainment at GCSE and A-level, these are designed to showcase stimulating elements of HE study and promote interest and excitement about progression opportunities.

Our investment in widening participation work from 2017/18 will include a broad range of activities for different target audiences with a particular focus on aspiration raising in languages and in STEM subjects linked to the 2017 opening of our new HEFCE funded 'Future Technology Centre'.

During this coming year we will be considering how to focus our investment on activities that have the greatest impact. We will be examining all our activity against national evidence and our own evaluation data in order to reshape our programme from 2018/19 onwards on a strong evidence base.

3.4 Staff development to enhance widening participation

Our experience has shown that building strong academic and subject-specific links with target schools and colleges is an important way of breaking down perceived barriers and promoting accessibility of the University, as well as supporting pupil attainment. This is confirmed by the NSASS, which supports the concept that the quality of relationships with teachers is key to successful targeting. Hence, we offer professional development opportunities to school and college staff to build relationships and promote a smooth transition for students into the University.

This training for staff in local schools and colleges has the benefit of increasing the reputation of, and their knowledge of, the University. We plan to develop our offer in 2017/18; in particular we will offer CPD on HE changes and curriculum changes to staff in secondary schools. In addition we will continue to provide training for University staff, particularly those involved in admissions, on changes to the curriculum or organisation of schools and colleges.

3.5 Working collaboratively for impact

We will continue to work collaboratively with other HEIs and our target schools and colleges in order to ensure an effective outreach programme.

As part of HEFCE's National Networks for Collaborative Outreach initiative, the universities of Portsmouth, Southampton, Winchester, Southampton Solent, Bournemouth and the Arts University Bournemouth have set up the Southern Universities Network (SUN). This partnership built upon and extended our previous collaboration under the Hampshire Universities WP Group.

Across the SUN we have committed to provide outreach opportunities for all state schools and colleges in our region of Dorset, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. We will also exchange good practice and share effective approaches to WP.

Our particular focus for collaborative working in 2017/18 will cover:

Focus	Activities
Continuing Professional Development (staff and student union)	SUN will arrange staff development for WP practitioners including student ambassadors and Students' Union officers.
Vulnerable children & young people	SUN will continue in partnership to develop and promote wider understanding of the issues facing vulnerable children and young people. We will work in partnerships with local authorities and voluntary sector agencies. This work will be informed by the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers.
BME work	SUN will continue to promote and support the progression of students from minority ethnic communities, working with community groups and sharing our networks to maximise opportunities for collaborative delivery.
Disability	SUN will develop and extend collaborative projects which support the progression of students with disabilities, drawing on the expertise of specialists within our universities, current students with disabilities and those working in the field.

As the current funding for NNCO comes to an end in December 2016 we will be investigating ways to continue our collaborative working in order to improve the participation of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We will continue to work collaboratively with other institutions as part of the Higher Education Access and Tracking (HEAT) service. This provides a collaborative targeting, monitoring and evaluation service in support of our outreach work. It allows us to report on the impact of our activities in terms of progression to any HEI. It also provides systems and data to underpin an evidence base for WP practice and reporting. Recent reports show us that progression to HE from our outreach activity with quintiles 1&2 (POLAR 3) is 34% as compared to the national average for these groups of less than 25%.

In 2017/18 we will maintain our membership of the Southern Widening Participation Practitioners Network (SWPPN), a group of fifteen universities who meet to share good practice and resources in relation to widening participation work with schools.

We will also continue to work with partners such as the STEMNET and SEPnet to deliver STEM focused activities for secondary school pupils.

3.6 Financial advice for potential undergraduate and PGCE applicants

The University of Portsmouth is proactive in the financial advice we offer to prospective applicants, their parents and carers, and to our undergraduates. We provide comprehensive and impartial advice focusing on the affordability of higher education, with information ranging from the level of support available whilst studying to budgeting and financial capability whilst on course. We will also continue to provide tailored advice for priority groups including care leavers, students with disabilities and those with children.

Providing clear, accessible financial advice will continue to be the focus for our activity for 2017 entry and beyond, to ensure applicants and their families make informed decisions and are not deterred from entering higher education because of incomplete or incorrect information.

The University's Student Finance Centre will continue to offer specially targeted events for local schools and colleges which include impartial finance presentations for potential students, their parents and advisers. Focusing on support available to those from low income families, we strive to ensure people understand the costs and benefits of higher education and the financial packages available. The team delivered 127 events in schools and colleges in 2014/15 and will continue to strengthen and develop these relationships. Specialist advice is provided to potential PGCE applicants at targeted events.

3.7 Investment in student bursaries

We are introducing changes in the balance of expenditure within this Access Agreement (see section 2). In 2017/18 we will invest £4.6 million in bursaries for students from low income families, reducing to £4.1 million in 2018/19 as the impact of lower bursaries for new students feeds through. Research by OFFA and the University has confirmed the ongoing importance of bursaries, in ensuring that students are not deterred from going to university on financial grounds².

3.8 Our broader strategic contribution

The University is leading the establishment of a University Technical College in Portsmouth, in collaboration with Portsmouth City Council and the Royal Navy. Opening in 2017, the UTC will contribute to improvements in educational outcomes at 16 and 18, enabling more young people to have the opportunity to enter higher education.

² *National Strategy for Access and Student Success: Interim Report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills* (18 January 2013). (HEFCE and OFFA)).

Our new “Future Technology Centre” will open in 2017, supported by £5m HEFCE capital investment. By removing many of the barriers to studying traditionally male-dominated subjects, the University’s new Centre aims to help change the perceptions of engineering and technology and encourage more women and people from under-represented groups to see a future for themselves in industries for which the UK has a pressing need for more talent. The University is also working to introduce Degree Apprenticeships from 2016 in partnership with local employers.

4. STUDENT SUCCESS MEASURES

4.1 Promoting success for vulnerable students

Retention rates at Portsmouth are healthy, with better than HESA benchmark non-continuation rates³. We will continue to invest in a wide range of support, to ensure students from diverse backgrounds have every opportunity to succeed at Portsmouth. Expenditure on student success and progression through this Agreement will be £2.4 million. This expenditure includes investment to ensure that our pro-active support for disabled students is maintained, despite reductions in the Disabled Students Allowance.

We recognise that widening participation students may find it more difficult to complete their courses due to financial pressures. For example, mature students, students with disabilities and students who are carers may face particular financial challenges. To reduce the risk that financial challenges will lead to withdrawal, the University will continue to offer bursaries to students from lowest income families. Section 5 has full details of this financial support for retention.

4.2 Support to promote student retention and success

Taking into account the current context, and in recognition of our responsibility to ensure that resources are directed to those activities which provide evidence of the greatest impact, we are making changes to the deployment of additional fee income from 2017/18, in accordance with OFFA guidance.

Our current bursaries, awarded to students from low-income households, are relatively high. We will reduce the level of these bursary awards from 2017/18 onwards, increasing the proportion of our access agreement spending on other measures, in keeping with OFFA and Government guidance on this issue. This rebalancing will enable us to direct a greater proportion of expenditure in to other types of recruitment and retention activity, focused on target groups. Investments include the funding of additional Learning Support posts in areas facing the greatest challenges in relation to student retention. It will also allow us to contribute to the anticipated shortfall due to the anticipated reduction in HEFCE Student Opportunity Funding, which currently funds essential activities.

To mitigate the risk that financial challenges will lead to withdrawal, the University will continue to offer bursaries to students from families with the lowest incomes. Section 5 includes full details of this support for student retention.

The University has a generous hardship fund, which provides flexible support, targeted at low income students in greatest need, for example lone parents and disabled students. Feedback from individual students and from the Students' Union highlights the importance of these funds in helping students complete their courses successfully.

To further mitigate the impact of changes to student bursaries, the University will increase annual funding by £0.4m to £1.3 million per annum to the Hardship Fund to minimise withdrawal of lower income students due to financial pressures. This allocation includes support for Care Leavers as well as disabled students who can no longer access full funding through the Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) for essential equipment.

³ HESA performance indicators Tables 3b and 3c published in March 2016

The beneficial impact of our hardship fund has been confirmed through recent evaluation with students. In 2014/15 only 3% of withdrawing students cited “financial difficulties” as their reason for leaving the course. The Hardship Fund survey revealed that 88% of students felt the fund payment they received enabled them to continue on their course and focus on their studies. A further 34% reported that they would have withdrawn from their studies without the fund, demonstrating the value of this targeted financial support.

4.2 Broader finance-related activities to promote retention and student success

The University’s Student Finance Centre team works actively with undergraduates to help develop and embed financial capability and literacy in students with the overall aim of enabling students to progress and ultimately complete their course. In addition to the students who access the service through visits to the Student Finance Centre, we delivered events to around 11,000 students in 2014/15. These include attending Freshers’ Fair, departmental induction and student registration events.

4.2.1 Outreach across Campus

The Student Finance Centre continues to deliver the ‘Love Your Money’ roadshow which is offered at various locations across the campus with the aim of engaging with students who may not access our service in the traditional ways. Working in collaboration with the Student’s Union the team engages with students through interactive activities and focusses on key issues such as credit scoring, payday loans avoiding loan sharks and identity fraud.

Students are able to find out how the Student Finance Centre can help them, including how they can apply for hardship funds and access budgeting advice. Feedback gained from students has been overwhelmingly positive receiving comments such as “Very useful, especially for the younger students” and “very helpful in keeping students on track”.

We also continue to run our programme of money themed sessions, in collaboration with the Students’ Union to coincide with the National Association of Student Money Advisers’ (NASMA) initiative, National Student Money Week. This year’s event took our sessions out to local WP colleges to show them aspects of student life on a budget. We also work with Student Ambassadors on campus who helped us to engage with students and raise the profile of the Centre while alerting students to the support available to them.

4.2.2 Further developments

Through our Student Finance Centre, the University will explore further opportunities to widen our outreach activities and reach vulnerable students who may not feel confident in approaching our service directly.

The Centre works closely with the University’s Equality & Diversity Team to gather and analyse data on students accessing the service to better understand the needs of our students. We aim to identify any potential gaps in service users and identify any common themes in reasons for approaching the service so we can look at ensuring we reach and support those who are most vulnerable, particularly BME and Disabled students.

Our Student Finance Centre will also be working closely with the University’s Wellbeing Service and Mental Health Advisers to establish a robust referral mechanism to support students with complex needs who may require a multi-agency approach to their support.

4.3 Academic and personal support to enhance student success

The University's success to date in recruiting students from widening participation backgrounds means that it is essential that we offer a comprehensive range of student support services, aimed at continuing to increase academic success rates and progression to employment.

Our students enter higher education with a diverse range of backgrounds and entry qualifications. Services such as the Academic Skills Unit, Maths Café, Disability Advice Centre, Chaplaincy and the Counselling Service work with our academic departments to ensure that students have a positive experience of higher education, which meets their particular needs

For a number of years, through our Access Agreement we have made additional investments in promoting a high quality student experience, addressing the needs of students from diverse widening participation backgrounds. These investments included fifteen additional posts in faculties to provide support for learning, additional funding for mental health advice and additional funding for our employability service. We have chosen to embed these additional posts in our academic departments and faculties, as this is the most effective way to provide integrated support for retention. Vulnerable students can be supported with no stigma and referred to specialist University services if necessary in a sensitive way. The effectiveness of this embedded approach was confirmed by recent research into good practice in the sector⁴.

From 2017/18 through this Access Agreement we will significantly increase investment in support to promote retention and success of target groups. We anticipate this investment will include additional posts in all faculties to provide support for learning and promote student engagement, along with investment in learner analytics to help us to understand differential outcomes for target groups and monitor the impact of our interventions.

Detailed plans are being developed in consultation with Faculties and students. The University has appointed an Equality Adviser (Student Experience) whose role is to support our academic departments and professional services in addressing issues such as attainment for Students.

The Equality Adviser is currently developing proposals focused on supporting BME students, for example addressing the "white curriculum" or issues of "belonging" both of which research shows impact on student outcomes. A broader action is that all staff are now required to undertake Unconscious Bias training as part of the University "core" training package. Activity is also underway at a faculty level, such as identifying pilot projects to embed equality and diversity into practice including tackling issues of BME attainment; for example through a successful project using peer mentors which has improved achievement by BME students in Pharmacy. Again staff development will be a feature of our approach, with activities such as a recent workshop on BME attainment delivered by the HE Academy. Work is also underway to identify strategic options in relation to under-attainment by male students.

To promote engagement with these issues, all faculties now receive tailored student and staff equality reports and are expected to include actions in their business plans to address any issues that may be highlighted. We will continue to evaluate the impact of all these measures through monitoring of withdrawal and success rates for different groups of students and analysis of students' reasons for withdrawal.

⁴ Bowes, L., Jones, S., Thomas, L., Moreton, R., Birkin, G., & Nathwani, T. (March 2013). *The Uses and Impact of HEFCE Funding for Widening Participation* (CFE and Edge Hill University report to HEFCE).

4.4 Progression to employment and postgraduate study

Through and beyond the curriculum, the University aims to enable students to develop skills and gain experience which will prepare them for success in the graduate global labour market.

Our University Strategy 2015-2020 sets out our commitment to ensuring that every student takes part in career-enhancing activities such as placements, exchanges, enterprise, volunteering and work-based learning. Half of our full-time undergraduate students come from low income families. Our active support for employability assists all students. Those from low income families may derive particular benefit, for example, they are less likely to be able to take unpaid internships, so benefit from other ways of developing their skills in preparation for employment.

The University has committed to offering up to 300 postgraduate scholarships worth £3,000 to Portsmouth graduates wishing to progress to Master's level courses in 2016/17, following the success of a HEFCE-supported scheme in 2015/16. Priority is being given to students from low-income households who demonstrate high academic achievement. Depending on success of this scheme in 2016/17 it may be continued into 2017/18 and beyond. Funding for this scheme is in addition to our Access Agreement expenditure.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

5.1 Bursaries through the 2017/18 Access Agreement

These bursaries cover full-time undergraduate new entrants in 2017/18. Bursaries for new entrants who started in 2016/17 or earlier and are continuing into 2017/18 have already been agreed by OFFA and will not be changed.

5.2 2017/18 entrants

5.2.1 Home fee paying students resident in England on full-time undergraduate courses⁵

Residual Household income	Award in year 1	Award per annum in years 2 – 4
£25,000 or less	£750	£750
£25,001 or more	£0	£0

Awards will be payable to eligible English full-time Sandwich students on HEFCE supported courses, paying £9,250 fees. From 2017/18 this will include new entrants to courses which were previously NHS commissioned. It will include students continuing to the Master of Architecture course.

5.2.2 Home fee paying students resident in England on full-time PGCE courses

Bursaries will only be payable for eligible English students on:

- i. PGCE Business
- ii. PGCE Post Compulsory Education
- iii. Schools Direct PGCEs, if no other bursary is received

Residual Household income	Award in year 1 only
£25,000 or less	£750
£25,001 or more	£0

Students on our other PGCE courses⁶ may receive National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) bursaries of up to £20,000, depending on their subject of study and UG degree class.

5.3 Bursaries for new entrants from earlier years continuing in 2017/18

Bursaries for these continuing students will be payable at the rates approved in our previous Access Agreements.

⁵ This includes students on the Masters in Architecture course which is treated as Undergraduate for fees purposes.

⁶ The specific courses eligible for these University of Portsmouth bursaries will be reviewed, if there are any changes to the courses for which NCTL bursaries are available in 2017/18.

5.4 Eligibility for our awards package

English full-time undergraduate students, paying their own fees of £9,250 in 2017/18 and meeting the family income criteria, will receive bursaries as detailed above. We will not offer bursaries to students from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland or other EU countries outside the UK, as they are subject to different financial arrangements. Lower fees of £6,150 will be maintained for our full-time franchised courses⁷.

The fee for our on-campus and franchised part-time undergraduate courses will be no more than £6,165 pro rata to credit studied. As these fees are substantially lower than fees for Portsmouth based full-time undergraduate courses, these students will not be entitled to bursaries.

Students paying substantially lower fees for a language year abroad, an Erasmus year out, a sandwich year out or repeat year of study will also be ineligible for bursaries for that year of study. Students whose fees are paid or part paid through a sponsorship arrangement are also ineligible.

5.5 Income levels and awards in 2018/19 onwards

Bursary levels and income levels for eligibility will be amended in future, in line with OFFA requirements and taking account of University funding and priorities.

5.6 Additional support for Care leavers

We will offer an additional annual bursary of £1,700 for UK full-time undergraduate, Masters in Architecture and PGCE students who are/have been looked after by any local authority or foster carer, or who are currently living in sheltered accommodation or a Foyer Federation. This bursary will not be means-tested and is in addition to any other entitlement. These students are offered a Personal Finance Adviser to provide tailored information and guidance about available funding and help with financial planning.

We have assisted 50 students in the current year, and we are committed to continuing to support this small group of students who face particular challenges in entering and remaining in higher education.

We will continue to work with Local Authorities, Social Workers and other universities to share and learn from good practice for supporting access and retention of care leavers.

⁷ Except students continuing from 2016/17 or earlier at South Downs College, where the fee will remain £6,000

6. TARGETS AND MILESTONES

6.1 HESA performance indicators

For our Access Agreement the University has selected targets that can be monitored consistently over time and for which benchmarking information is available, to enable meaningful evaluation of our performance. Table 7a of the Annex to this Access Agreement sets out our targets for HESA performance indicators, focusing on successful recruitment and retention of key widening participation groups.

In our Access Agreements since 2012/13 we have focused on recruitment and retention of students from low participation neighbourhoods, after taking advice from UCAS and HESA about the reliability of data on different indicators of widening participation. This focus on low participation neighbourhoods is helpful, enabling us to selectively target our outreach activities on schools, colleges and other organisations with catchment areas including these priority neighbourhoods. Our targets are based on POLAR3 classification.

6.2 Other milestones and targets

Table 7b of the Annex includes a range of targets related to our outreach activity. This includes collaborative targets, where targets will be agreed with our partners following evaluation of the success of our collaborative activities. The resulting impact of these activities will be monitored through our achievement of headline strategic targets in Table 7a.

6.3 Developing additional internal indicators

While HESA performance indicators have advantages in terms of benchmarking performance and consistency over time, they also have disadvantages due to the delay in publishing data.

Therefore the University has developed internal 'lead' indicators, to supplement the HESA 'lag' indicators. Access Agreement targets based on the POLAR3 classification are mirrored in our internal monitoring systems, where we track applicants from low participation neighbourhoods and ensure their applications get careful consideration, taking account of their context. We provide regular management information to senior managers on application and conversion of applicants from low participation neighbourhoods, enabling evaluation of progress during the recruitment cycle

In addition, in recent years we have developed internal management information systems which enable us to review our performance in the recruitment and retention of students and carry out more detailed analysis based on specific characteristics. For example, it is this which has enabled us to identify variances in retention rates between specific BME groups. As we continue to learn from and develop these tools we anticipate being able to improve further our ability to identify areas where resources should be focused and where appropriately targeted interventions can enhance retention rates further.

Further investment in learner analytics is planned. This will enable us to develop more flexible and sophisticated approaches to monitoring trends, identifying student groups with lower than average outcomes and monitoring engagement with, and outcomes from, measures intended to improve these outcomes.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Arrangements and timescales

The University will monitor implementation of this Access Agreement in accordance with OFFA guidance. We will undertake timely monitoring of expenditure and recruitment of widening participation students, to evaluate the success of our Access Agreement and our overall commitment to widening participation in higher education.

Given the strategic importance of widening participation to the University of Portsmouth, monitoring data and trends are regularly considered by our senior management team, relevant University Committees and the Board of Governors.

7.2 Evaluation and impact of our outreach activities

We are continuing to build our evidence base to evaluate which outreach activities are most successful and ensure our work is evidence led. Our evaluation allows us to examine what we do, consider about how we can improve it and informs how we allocate future resources. We measure all activities against our over-arching objective, which is to help our target groups make informed decisions about progression to higher education based on high quality activities, information, advice and guidance from our staff. We have a current Evaluation Plan for Education Liaison and Outreach Work, which fully describes the Why-What-How we evaluate, how we handle data and how we analyse and report our evaluation.

In addition, evidence from national evaluation is used to inform our planning. Organisations such as OFFA, HEFCE, Action on Access, the Higher Education Academy and the National Council for Educational Excellence have all produced research on the features of a successful education liaison and widening participation programme. The consensus is that our planned, integrated and sequential approach, operating from Year 5 to 13, is likely to be much more successful than one-off interventions.

Measurement of the longer-term impact and evaluation is an integral part of our activities and the findings inform future strategy development. Evaluation activities include;

Participant feedback	All participants are given the opportunity to feedback their comments following an education liaison and outreach event. This data is analysed and used to inform future practice.
Good practice toolkits	Tools to measure impact are kept under constant review. The AMOSSE toolkit is currently in use and has been adapted for selected activities across all age ranges. This allows us to clearly articulate and measure the impact of a range of our activities across all age groups. We seek to determine whether an intended change, which is defined for each activity, has taken place as a result of an outreach intervention.
Tracking engagement	Data is utilised to target particular institutions and to track the pathways of selected individuals who have engaged with our more intensive activities.

Collaborative evaluation	The University subscribes to the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) service which provides systems and data to support an evidence base to evaluate the success of our outreach work. Recent reports show us that progression to HE for individuals living in quintiles 1 & 2 (POLAR 3) who have taken part in our outreach activity is 34%, as opposed to the national average for these groups of less than 25%
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7.3 Measuring impact of our finance – related activities

The University has been proactive in delivering financial information within local schools and colleges for nearly 20 years. The continued growth in this area has been driven by both information from our local providers about parents’ and students’ concerns over funding, and sector research⁸ which suggests financial issues are not only a key decision making factor but that financial barriers can still deter some students from progressing into HE.

We continue to measure the impact of the finance sessions through feedback questionnaires targeted at parents, students and school/college staff and “temperature checks” before and after presentations. These methods continue to demonstrate that our audiences have a greater understanding of university finance and are less concerned about the financial aspects of studying after they have attended one of our funding presentations.

Feedback from advisers and school/college staff has also indicated that they feel their students are better informed about finance as a result of the work we do and therefore can make informed choices about studying at University. Examples gathered from recent events state “the feedback from parents has been extremely positive” and “brilliant presentation on student funding”. Our evaluation indicated a 42% increase in knowledge and understanding of Higher Education funding.

Research⁹ suggests that universities are highly trusted organisations whose information, advice and guidance is valued over and above third parties, and that students like to obtain this information through face-to-face activity, as well as through printed materials and websites and that these messages should be consistent. This external research reinforces the value of our investment in providing proactive financial advice and guidance for potential students. We will continue to work closely with Student Finance England to ensure the most up to date and accurate information is made available to prospective students.

7.4 Evaluation of financial support

The overall measure of success for our programme of financial support is our success in recruiting and retaining students from low income families and widening participation backgrounds. In 2010/11 44% of our FT UG students were from low income families. In 2013/14 this rose to 51% despite the increase in tuition fees. We will continue to monitor our overall performance through HESA widening participation indicators and Student Loans Company data on income groups of students.

⁸ Diamond, A., Bowes, L., Michael, A., Thomas, L., Porter, A., & Sheen, J. (May 2012). *Formative Evaluation of the National Scholarship Programme* (CFE and the Widening Participation Research Centre, Edge Hill University Report to HEFCE).

The Emerging Undergraduate Market for 2012: Student Tracker cycle six (Autumn Term). (Havas People and Callen Associates Report)

⁹ Dyke, M., Rietdijk, W., Johnston, B., Muijs, D., Eastwood, T., & Rowan, T. (2011). *The impact of increased tuition fees in England on the decision to participate in Higher Education: A study of year 12 pupils in the Southampton region* (Southampton Education School and Strategy, Planning and Governance, University of Southampton report).

Our Student Finance Centre will continue to track the students that it supports, including monitoring of withdrawal rates and reasons for withdrawals. We gather feedback from all students using the Student Finance Centre and for the first time in 2014/15, we surveyed successful applicants to the Undergraduate Hardship Fund to understand the impact of the support provided through these funds. A questionnaire was sent to 850 students asking a variety of questions relating to the payment they received and how it assisted them during their studies and whether it had ultimately helped them stay on their course.

The findings were very encouraging, indicating our hardship fund had a positive impact on the students who received it. 69% of respondents stated they would have definitely or possibly withdrawn from study without this support. 89% of respondents also stated the payment allowed them focus on their studies suggesting a possible link to improved attainment although this cannot be proven.

Only 50% of respondents reported that the funds fully resolved their financial difficulties indicating that more financial support would be welcomed. 50% also applied more than once suggesting students face a number of ongoing and complex issues which cannot simply be fixed with a single payment from the Fund. This finding was reinforced, as 42% reported that they needed to take out an additional loan (eg from parents, friends, other credit providers) on top on their statutory support suggesting that for many, the Government funding is not sufficient to meet their needs. These findings clearly support the need for the University's hardship fund and suggest that retention rates for vulnerable students would be impacted without the funds in place.

For these reasons, we will invest an additional £0.4m per annum in our student hardship fund from 2017/18. This will provide essential support for students who are particularly impacted by sector-wide changes in student funding and by the reduction in our student bursaries from 2017/18. We will continue to raise awareness about the Hardship Fund across campus to ensure all vulnerable students are able to access this support where necessary. Our approach to evaluation of financial support will also be broadened in the coming year to assess how many of the respondents also received University Bursaries and what impact they feel this support had on them while studying.

Through the National Association of Student Money Advisors we will continue to share good practice and learn from experience within the sector. We will also consider from evidence of the effectiveness of different forms of support from OFFA research and feedback from other institutions.

8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

8.1 Promoting equality and diversity

The University is committed to ensuring that equality and diversity considerations are embedded into our culture and day to day activity. These considerations are embedded within the “values” of the University’s Strategy 2015-2020.

The University is committed to “inspire and support staff and students to achieve their potential”, “respect and celebrate diversity and equal opportunity through an inclusive culture” and “listen and respond to the needs of our students and staff”. The core function of our Equality & Diversity Unit is to support the University in taking these commitments forward and making real differences for students and staff.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are also strongly embedded in the University Student Charter and “Equality and Diversity: Staff Rights and Responsibilities”.

Actions relevant to this Access Agreement include:

Setting objectives	The University sets and publishes Equality Objectives. These objectives, updated in 2015, include clear objectives around student attainment for both BME and male students, which evidence shows is a priority area in order to successfully widen access and achievement. Measures of success and progress are reported annually to our senior management team.
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Monitoring and evaluation	The Equality & Diversity team prepare a detailed annual report reviewing progress towards the University’s Equality Objectives and produce detailed equality data reports relating to staff and students. Analysis of this evidence informs policy development, priority setting and specific interventions aimed at enhancing equality, diversity and inclusion across the University’s activities, with a particular focus on admissions, student achievement and employability. These reports are examined by our senior management team and across our teaching faculties, with expectations that appropriate action is instigated to address any inequality of outcome.
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Resources	The Equality & Diversity team is well supported and resourced highlighting the importance senior management and the University as a whole place on this area of work. This includes a dedicated Equality Advisor focused on equality, diversity and inclusion for students supporting and guiding equality & diversity interventions across our academic and student support services, ensuring equality objectives set around student attainment and inclusion are met, as well as building closer working links with the Students’ Union and student societies. The University is currently recruiting an Equality Advisor (Charters Coordinator) whose role will be to support and progress the work within the Equality Challenge Unit’s Athena SWAN and RACE Charter marks. Both of which have the potential to play a significant part in progressing and retention inclusion for both staff and students in the areas of race and gender equality.
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Focus on attainment gaps	A key objective of the Equality & Diversity Unit is to support work across the University to improve the progression and educational achievement of male students and BME students, demonstrated through the University Equality Objectives 2015-17 EO1/EO2. The gap in outcomes for these groups remains little changed. Attainment gaps within the BME grouping are also being explored.
Focus on STEM	In November 2014 the University was awarded the Institution Athena SWAN Bronze Award. We aim for all STEM departments to have submitted for the Athena SWAN award by November 2016. The University will sign up to the new Extended Athena principles (encompassing gender/ transgender issues across all areas of the University for both academic and professional staff) in December 2016. The University will submit its Bronze renewal in April 2017 under these new extended principles.
Focus on widening participation	Ensuring that widening participation is integrated in the work of the Equality & Diversity team has led to the development of stronger links with the University's Education Liaison and Outreach Team. This has helped us ensure that the University is represented at appropriate local community and city events, giving the University the opportunity to promote itself to the widest audience as a place to study and work. This has included events in support of Black History Month, LGBT History Month and Portsmouth PRIDE.
Staff and student development	All staff are required to undertake Equality and Diversity training as a core training requirement. E-learning modules cover areas including Unconscious Bias, Bullying and Harassment and Equality in the Workplace. One-to-one sessions cover other areas including mental health awareness. This provision is also available to targeted students including ambassadors, sabbatical officers, student officers and society committee members. All students have access to a new equality resource via our Virtual Learning Environment.
Collaboration & local community	The University has worked closely with other organisations in the City on Equality and Diversity. These include Hampshire Constabulary, Portsmouth City Council, Portsmouth Carers and Autism Hampshire. We have also worked with Student Union Sabbatical Officers to ensure that students are represented on appropriate community groups, giving our student population a direct voice/input on issues that affect them during their time in the City. Continued collaboration with the Portsmouth Film Society has seen specific film festivals in support of LGBT History Month, Black History Month and International Women's Day. We support open lecture events throughout the year in support of equality related subjects. All these activities engage the University directly with the local community.
Benchmarking	We regularly audit our practices through benchmarking exercises offered by external organisations, including Athena SWAN, Stonewall Diversity Champions and GayByDegree, Working Families, Mindful Employer and Time to Change.

We have selected targets in this Access Agreement which focus on increasing the recruitment and retention of students from low participation neighbourhoods and low income families. By targeting these groups, our activities will also target key groups who are over-represented in low participation neighbourhoods and schools. This includes BME and white, British men from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

8.2 Admissions arrangements

The University's Admissions Code of Practice¹⁰ values and promotes diversity in the student community. We ensure that all our students are given the opportunity to achieve their potential in relevant subjects at appropriate levels. In accordance with this objective, we are committed to recognising the academic and other relevant achievements of each applicant. We welcome applications from motivated candidates from all backgrounds and recognise that student potential is not always identified from formal academic qualifications. Consequently we accept applications, taking account of prior experiential learning as well as a wide range of vocational and other qualifications. This is important as research¹¹ has highlighted that progression rates to H.E. for learners with vocational or non A-level qualifications are significantly lower than those for learners with A-levels.

The University continues to use contextual data about applicants in line with good practice highlighted by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) programme. Our admissions arrangements identify students with the potential to benefit from our courses by utilising relevant contextual data to inform our decision making, thus supporting consistent decision making. We ensure that applicants are given fair and comprehensive opportunities to be considered for the course of their choice and that suitable offers are made to individual applicants, recognising their potential as well as their academic achievements to date.

The contextual information used for this purpose is drawn from UCAS and the *common basket of data* proposed by the SPA. These data provide quantitative and qualitative evidence of disadvantage, specifically in relation to the educational background of candidates, including the average QCA score for the school and socio-economic factors such as the POLAR 3 classification.

We have developed and continue to build a comprehensive data set on our WP applicants. This data will be used to evaluate our success in achieving our widening participation recruitment objectives. Our Admissions staff and Education Liaison and Outreach team work closely to share information, including the HEAT database and to extend our evaluation processes to include applicant's schools and colleges, and outreach activity where that information exists.

8.3 Accessibility of professional courses

The Milburn report on Fair Access to the Professions highlighted the importance of access to the professions to promote social mobility. An analysis of the background of entrants to the professional courses run at Portsmouth (focusing on engineering, accountancy, law, architecture and pharmacy)¹² found little difference in the representation of students from low participation neighbourhoods on these professional courses, compared to the average across all other full-time undergraduate courses. We will ensure that our combination of aspiration-raising work and sensitive admissions arrangements continue to support access to the professions.

¹⁰ Available at <http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/academicregistry/filetodownload,14404,en.pdf>

¹¹ *National Strategy for Access and Student Success: Interim Report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills* (18 January 2013). (HEFCE and OFFA).

¹² This analysis showed that the proportion of students from low participation wards (quintile 1 in HEFCE's POLAR2 classification) on our professional courses was 7.9% compared with 8.8% of our students overall being from quintile 1.

8.4 Flexible provision

The University already provides a variety of routes into and through higher education, to provide opportunities in addition to traditional three year degree courses. For example we run full-time and part-time Foundation Degrees, with progression opportunities to Honours degree top-ups. We also provide a range of part-time and distance learning courses.

The University set part-time undergraduate tuition fees pro rata according to the standard study intensity of the course, with a full-time equivalent fee of not more than £6,165. Fees will be maintained at this level in 2017/18. This will minimise the impact of fee increases on part-time students, while recognising the different demands that they make on the University and the fact that many such students come from under-represented groups.

9. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

9.1 Provision of information to students

We are committed to providing clear and accessible information for potential applicants and their advisors, to allow effective decision making. This commitment includes taking a thorough and pro-active approach to meeting Key Information Set requirements. We will continue to provide timely information to UCAS and the SLC, to ensure public information about our fees and additional study costs are accurate. Our plans to provide effective financial advice for potential applicants and their advisors were outlined earlier in this document.

9.2 Provision of information for prospective students

The University continues to engage with its prospective students in a variety of ways via a relationship campaign and through targeted literature. This includes information on fees and financial support in the Prospectus and a 'Focus on supporting you' mailer to applicants.

With a new digital focus to the University's relationship campaign, information promoting Portsmouth as an affordable city to live in and information on student loans is sent to applicants, signposting them to detailed information on our website.

Additionally, our Student Finance Centre maintain a variety of resources, case studies and digital funding tools available on their website. These include an interactive timeline providing a step-by-step guide to University finances starting from the point of application through to re-application for the following year. We also provide a budget planner, enabling students to input their income and expenditure and produce a financial plan for the year ahead, preparing them for financial independence.

For those who require printed materials, we continue to produce a variety of literature, outlining general support for all students and also specific funding for target groups including students with disabilities or dependents, care leavers and those on part-time or postgraduate courses.

In 2016 the Student Finance Centre once again successfully gained reaccreditation to the improved **Matrix** quality standard. This standard demonstrates and recognises our commitment to the delivery of high quality information, advice and guidance by continual review, evaluation and development of our service.

9.3 Enhancing advice and guidance for applicants

We plan to further enhance and develop our relationships with local and target schools and colleges, expanding our points of contact within institutions already engaging, and also working with new providers to expand the level of finance specific outreach support offered.

We have introduced an email campaign into our communications with schools and colleges, sending information and offers to provide support and deliver events throughout the academic year, which has increased engagement and uptake of activities. In addition, we continue to work closely with our regional contact at Student Finance England to share information, best practice and event opportunities, and we will continue to meet annually for training and financial updates.

For 2017/18 we will continue to explore ways of developing our portfolio of presentations and workshops to ensure we are meeting the needs and concerns of both advisers and applicants, taking particular care to address concerns attributed to the cuts to NHS course funding and the Disabled Students Allowance. We will also continue to improve our use of digital and interactive technology within our delivery, where possible.

We will continue to focus our messages in a positive light, explaining that there is no upfront cost associated to University, that repayments are income contingent, and identifying the differences in student loans to commercial lending, in effort to dispel misinformation or fears associated to the cost of higher education. Furthermore we will focus efforts on addressing the cost of living for students, implementing effective financial capability skills among students, in an attempt to reduce the number of students experiencing financial difficulty.

9.4 Broader advice and guidance

The changes to information, advice and guidance provision in schools have meant many young people have reduced access to a comprehensive careers education programme or the opportunity to discuss their future pathways with a trained careers adviser. Whilst we cannot fill this void completely we have considered how we can best enhance information and advice available to young people considering HE as an option.

For 2017/18 we are continuing to improve our range of printed and on-line materials for children, young people their teachers and parents in order to enhance their knowledge about HE and the pathways to get there. We will continue to evaluate and seek new opportunities for engaging and connecting with our audiences as technologies and behaviours change in response to this.

By continuing to build on the University's existing successful work in this area, we aim to overcome concerns about all HE access issues including tuition fees and finance, as well as ensuring that the University is strongly placed to meet our Access Agreement recruitment and retention targets.

10. CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

10.1 Consultation

Due to changes in HEFCE Student Opportunity Funding, this Access Agreement includes changes in bursary levels for new students from 2017/18. We are grateful to the University of Portsmouth Students' Union (UPSU) who have engaged positively with consideration of alternative bursary models. Our approach to bursaries in 2017/18 is based on UPSU feedback, as the Students' Union recommended a flat rate bursary each year as being most effective at supporting ongoing student engagement and retention.

The Students' Union has also been consulted about the increase in tuition fees from 2017/18, due to the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework. Taking account of feedback from the Students' Union, our Governors have approved an increase in the overall proportion of fees above base allocated to measures to support recruitment, retention and progression of WP students from 24% in our May 2016 submission, to 25% in this updated Access Agreement. This is 25% of the full amount of fee income above baseline, incorporating the additional fee income due to tuition fee increases from 2017/18.

As members of the Board of Governors, the President of the Students' Union and a non-UPSU student governor will also contribute to Governors' ongoing review of our performance in delivering this Access Agreement and associated targets.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones - Access Agreement 2017/18

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

Target type	Description	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
				2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>YOUNG FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS FROM LOW PARTICIPATION NEIGHBOURHOODS (POLAR3) (HESA Table T1a)</p> <p>We aim to outperform our location-adjusted benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2013-14	Benchmark 9.7%	11.25	11.25	11.50	11.50	11.75
HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>MATURE FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS WITH NO PREVIOUS HE & FROM LOW PARTICIPATION NEIGHBOURHOOD (POLAR3) (HESA Table T2a)</p> <p>We aim to outperform our location-adjusted benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2013-14	Benchmark 13.0%	15.50	15.50	15.75	15.75	16.00
HESA T3b - No longer in HE after 1 year & in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>NON-CONTINUATION FOLLOWING YEAR OF ENTRY: YOUNG FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS FROM LOW PARTICIPATION NEIGHBOURHOODS (POLAR3) (HESA Table T3b)</p> <p>We aim to outperform benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2012-13	Benchmark: 7.7%	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.20	6.20
HESA T3c - No longer in HE after 1 year & no previous HE qualification (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	<p>NON-CONTINUATION FOLLOWING YEAR OF ENTRY: MATURE FULL-TIME FIRST DEGREE ENTRANTS WITH NO PREVIOUS HE (HESA Table T3c)</p> <p>We aim to outperform benchmark over the next five years.</p>	2012-13	Benchmark: 14.1%	11.60	11.60	11.60	11.60	11.60

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Description	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones				
				2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Subscribe to the Higher Education Access Tracker database to enhance tracking, monitoring and evaluation	Yes	2011-12	Subscription in place	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data	Annual analysis of target schools & colleges using HEAT data
The Southern Universities Network (SUN) will promote and support the progression of students from minority ethnic communities with each university sharing its networks to maximise opportunities for collaborative delivery	Yes	2013-14	Not yet in place	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered
SUN will develop and extend collaborative projects which support the progression of students with disabilities drawing on the expertise of specialists within our universities, our students with disabilities and those working in this field.	Yes	2013-14	Not yet in place	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year delivered
SUN will develop and promote wider understanding of the issues facing vulnerable children and young people in partnership with local authorities and voluntary sector agencies. Work will be informed by the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers	Yes	2011-12	Group established and remit agreed	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered
SUN will organise staff development for WP practitioners and SU officers	Yes	2013-14	Not yet in place	An annual staff development event for staff and students	Annual conference	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered	Collaborative activities agreed in previous year will be delivered