



## ACCESS AGREEMENT (2008-09 – 2010-11)

### 1. Introduction

The University of Huddersfield places the needs of students first. We are proud of our record in widening participation to higher education and have one of the most socially inclusive student populations in the UK. This is combined with high levels of student achievement and success in graduate employment. The University is committed to its local community and to actively taking education to students in order to widen participation, as well as delivering excellence in teaching and enhancing student success.

The University's Strategic Plan for 2006-10 commits it to continuing with this success and to ensuring further enhancement of the quality of the student experience through a strategy of improving learning and teaching. About 50 additional new teaching appointments have been made in the last two years to improve student:staff ratios and to enhance student learning. This investment in staff and student support will continually increase as income increases to the University, **which will be predominantly dedicated to teaching and learning and student support.**

The University has performed well in terms of recruiting regionally and especially from low-income groups and local ethnic-minority communities. Since the publication of the first set of HEFCE Performance Indicators in 1999 the University has performed above the national benchmarks, all-England averages, and the average for universities in Yorkshire. For example, throughout the last five years, the University has recruited a higher percentage of young full-time undergraduate entrants from state schools, lower social classes and low participation neighbourhoods than any other university in Yorkshire. Despite sector-wide growth in these areas, further improvement has been achieved with the result that we continue to exceed the benchmarks. For example, nearly 50% of our home and EU first year students come from the three lowest socio economic groups in the latest HEFCE PIs.

Access to HE has been increased by the University opening University Centres in Oldham and Barnsley, where participation in HE is historically low but it is planned to have over 2,000 students in these two centres by 2010.

### 2. Fees from 2008-09

In accordance with the terms of the Higher Education Act 2004 the University of Huddersfield plans to use the facility for charging variable tuition fees for our current courses, from the academic year 2008-09.

- (i) For full-time home and EU students on all undergraduate degree courses (including PGCE students, but excluding those funded by the NHS) the University will charge £3,145 p.a. This maximum fee is set by the government and will apply to the whole duration of the course for which the student enrolls and will be subject to annual inflationary rises.
- (ii) To encourage widening participation and access further, indirect financial support will be given to students enrolled on **sub-degree courses** at all three sites (Foundation Degree, HND) by

charging a **reduced fee of £2,100 p.a.** To those students who enrol on **foundation, access or other 'year zero' courses**, the fee will be **reduced to £1,250 p.a.** for that year. Undergraduates at the University centres in Oldham and Barnsley will have a reduced fee of **£2,500 p.a.** to encourage access to HE. These fee reductions are equivalent to a forfeit of opportunity income to the University and subsidises this group by about £1.1m p.a.

- (iii) Indirect financial support will also be provided by charging **no fee** for those students undertaking a **placement year** to encourage the up-take of this facility and further enhance the employability of our students. This will only apply to those students paying the new higher tuition fee and is equivalent to subsidising this group by about £300k p.a.
- (iv) To facilitate access for students who need or choose to study **part-time** the University will **reduce** the full-time fee (£524 per 20 credit module) so that for 2008 the fee for part-time study will be **£270 per 20 credit module**. This is equivalent to subsidising this group by about £2.4m.
- (v) The total subsidy for the above due to reduced fees is about £3.8m p.a.
- (vi) Collaborating institutions that offer our franchised programmes will set their own fee and bursary levels. The Colleges must provide at least the minimum bursary to students on the full state support, if they charge the full fee. However, the University will increase its vigilance of the quality of the provision and the standards of the awards in these institutions. If there is evidence that the fees set by the partner college are having an adverse effect upon access or quality, then we will review this arrangement.

### **3. Amounts of additional fee income to be spent on bursaries**

The estimated additional fee income based on present student numbers will be approximately £13m p.a. in 2008-09. The University is amending its bursary scheme, as outlined below, to reflect the proposed changes in government state support thresholds. Existing students will continue to be supported by the bursary scheme in force at the time of their enrolment. The expenditure on bursaries is estimated to be £3.4m; representing about 24% of the additional income.

### **4. Bursaries and other financial support for students**

- (i) The University's strategy is to maintain its highly open access by offering a bursary scheme for all full-time home and EU students on all our degree and sub-degree courses (excluding those funded by the NHS). The scheme targets the most economically disadvantaged of our students by the following grants:
  - £500 p.a. to all students, but excluding those on a paid placement year, in receipt of the full HE Maintenance Grant from the Students Loan Company (SLC) (~50% of students)
  - £310 p.a. to all PGCE students in receipt of the full means tested element of the HE Maintenance Grant (£1,575 in 2008-09)
  - £310 p.a. to all social work students in receipt of the full HE Maintenance Grant.

The cost of these bursaries, including our current scheme, is estimated to amount to about £3.4m. Income thresholds will be defined for each of the payment levels and set annually in advance. Thus, in advance of taking up a place at Huddersfield, students and parents will be able to use the ready-reckoner on the SLC's website to find out how much they will receive from the SLC and how much additional bursary from the University. Full details of government maintenance grants and related threshold residual family incomes can be found at:  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/studentsupport/students/>

(ii) **Care Leavers Grant**

The University of Huddersfield is committed to supporting students who are care leavers in higher education. As part of this commitment we will award students who directly enter the University of Huddersfield on leaving Care a grant of £2,000 on entry which is in addition to the bursaries which may be available as described in (i) above and any external financial award received (e.g. LEA care leavers grant).

There may also be extra financial support for students available through our Access to Learning Fund (ALF).

(iii) Bursaries paid to students located in our partner FE colleges, who will set their own fee level, will be at the discretion of the FE college.

## **5. Provision of information to students**

All prospective students will be given written information about the financial support they could receive and the total cost of their tuition. This will include state and institutional support as well as some other potential sources. It will describe the direct costs and indications of associated costs such as accommodation and cost of living. It will indicate typical deferred costs in terms of repayment of loans.

The University provides an extensive financial information service to potential students. This provides a wide range of advice and support, including financial guidance, and the administration of financial relief, bursaries and awards. All of this information will be easily accessible through:

- the University's web-site
- the prospectus
- promotional material

## **6. Outreach work**

- The University has a long history of out-reach work to raise aspirations and applications to HE from currently under-represented groups. The University is proud of the success of its outreach programme, which has put the University of Huddersfield at the forefront nationally for recruiting students from low-income families. The activity is fundamental to our Strategic Plan and includes contributing to an improvement in the economic, social and cultural well-being of the region.

On the assumption that HEFCE maintains its financial support for widening participation at its present levels, including special initiatives, the University plans to maintain its current expenditure of about £1.5m p.a. on widening participation and reach-out activities. Our outreach work will be further embedded into the work of the institution in the period of the Strategic Plan and we do not initially plan to fund additional outreach activity from additional fee income. The University has long held the view that successfully widening participation requires that students succeed in their programmes of study and then move into graduate employment.

The University continues to achieve positive outcomes for graduates in employment and further study. We are particularly proud of our high numbers of sandwich courses, with around 600 students per year undertaking work placements integrated into their full-time studies. This has contributed to the good graduate employment rates in Huddersfield with about 90% of leavers taking up graduate or graduate track employment or further study.

The Strategic Plan for the period 2006-10 includes commitments to:

- deliver programmes with structures, curricula, and learning strategies matched to students' needs.

- improve the employability of students by ensuring that programmes focus on the needs of professional bodies and employers.
- improve access and completion rates of students from neighbourhoods with low participation in HE.
- provide HE in areas of low participation.

The University's commitment to achieving inclusion goes well beyond the admissions process, and we are fully committed to ensuring that students are supported in a manner that is appropriate for their own circumstance, to ensure that retention rates are good, and that students from all backgrounds have an equal opportunity at success. We are therefore keen to safeguard our current success at attracting, retaining and equipping students from the most under represented groups.

## 7. Milestones and Objectives

The University is fully committed to the following:

- Enhancing the strong level of participation of older learners
- Maintaining the current ethnic diversity of our population of home undergraduates
- Maintaining our position above benchmarks relating to low socio-economic groups

<b>Baseline Data Definition</b>	<b>Milestones</b>
Participation from lower socio economic groups	To maintain the position against HESA PI location adjusted benchmark for undergraduates and, through our two University Centres, provide programmes to areas of low HE participation.
Participation of students from low participation areas	Maintain the position against benchmark for undergraduates.
Participation of Disabled students	Maintain the position against HESA PI benchmark.
Participation of mature students	Maintain the position against HESA PI benchmark.

## 8. Monitoring compliance with the agreement

The University has well established mechanisms by which it monitors its achievements in widening participation, and will continue to use these reporting mechanisms to ensure that the aims set out in this document are fulfilled. This briefly consists of student tracking from pre-entry to employment, comparisons with benchmarks and regional and national performance indicators which are evaluated through the relevant university's committee structures. The University's Strategic Plan for 2006-10 is subject to performance management to ensure that key targets are met. This includes the development of suitable data sets, which will support the monitoring of our compliance to this access agreement.