



UNIVERSITY
of
GREENWICH

This access agreement is relevant for new full-time and part-time undergraduates who enter the university in the 2015-16 academic year.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The University of Greenwich has had a long standing commitment to widening access and maximising student achievement thereby helping students to fulfil their potential and ambitions. The percentage of students not in HE has significantly improved in 2012-13 to 7.5% an improvement of 3.4% from the previous year, which is 1.5% lower than the 9% benchmark (HESA Table 3a), the highest achievement in seven years.

1.2 We continue to be an institution with considerable ethnic and cultural diversity reflecting the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010: 45% of students are mature; 48% of students are from black minority ethnic backgrounds and 54% of students are female.

1.3 Improving access to and success in higher education for underrepresented groups continues to be a strength of the university with over 65% of students falling into at least one widening participation category. We are particularly proud of our long history of supporting students from underrepresented backgrounds to succeed in achieving a degree and moving into fulfilling employment and further study.

1.4 Our focus continues to be on improving retention and student achievement, and providing targeted financial support whilst maintaining outreach activities. Our access agreement strategy maintains an integrated student life cycle approach and over the next four years 33% of our OFFA commitments will be expended on student success and progression.

2.0 Assessment of our retention, student success and access performance

2.1 The University of Greenwich in 2012-13 exceeded its benchmarks for access. This position was underpinned by specific measures aimed at recruiting students from low participation neighbourhoods, state schools and lower socio-economic classes. The success of our access work is based upon working in partnership with regional institutions such as schools, colleges, local authorities and other higher education institutions (HEIs). An assessment of our access work in the 2012–13 academic year highlights:

1. Social classes IIIM, IV and V, which accounted for 53% of the undergraduate student body, exceeding the benchmark of 38%;
2. Some 97% of the university's student population progressed from state schools, against a benchmark of 95%;

3. Students from low participation neighbourhoods account for 11% of the student body, against a HEFCE locally adjusted benchmark of 8%;
4. The recruitment of mature students exceeds national benchmarks, with 45% of the university undergraduates compared to a UK average of 26%;
5. Over 60% of full time home undergraduate students are in receipt of state support (with a household income up to £42,611);

2.2 Our access retention targets are ambitious and stretching, and are aimed at positioning the University of Greenwich to be at the national average for all English universities by 2017. Excellent progress has been made in this regard with improvements in students not in HE (mentioned above) mirroring progress on improved continuation that currently stands at 88.9%, just 1% point below the sector average.

2.3 The University of Greenwich continues to make considerable progress in increasing the number of students who are awarded a degree, improving from 68.3% to 76.4% between 2010-11 and 2012-13 (HESA, Table 5). It is on course to achieve the national average of 78% by 2015-16. In addition, 61% of undergraduates graduating in July 2013 achieved a first or 2.1 honours degree, the best ever performance for the university.

2.4 Employability rates for University of Greenwich part-time graduates remain close to the sector average, with rates for full-time graduates approximately 6% points below the sector average and 3% points below the HEFCE benchmark adjusted target. A range of employability initiatives are being undertaken within the university to improve this position.

3.0 Fees, student numbers and fee income

3.1 Student numbers

As part of the university's access work, it continues to offer a proportion of its student numbers to partner colleges reflecting its commitment to Foundation Degrees and the development of HE in the Further Education Sector.

3.2 Fees for new students entering during the 2014-15 academic year

4.2.1 Bachelor Degrees, Integrated Masters and PGCE programmes on campus

Fees for Honours degrees, Integrated Masters and PGCE programmes studied at the university will be set at £9,000. The MPharm programme (jointly offered with the University of Kent and studied at the Medway Campus) will also continue to be charged at £9,000.

3.2.2 Bachelor Degrees and Integrated Masters delivered at partner colleges

Bachelor degrees studied at partner colleges will be charged a reduced rate of £8,400 with the exception of specialist provision in three colleges that requires expensive resources where a fee of £9,000 is charged.

3.2.3 Part-time Bachelor degree programmes

The fees for part-time Honours Degrees programmes will be pro rata to the full-time fee of £9000 for campus based provision and £8,400 (£9,000 for specialist provision) for programmes of study in partner colleges, where appropriate. The maximum amount of credits that can be studied in one academic year will be 90.

3.2.4 Sandwich year placements

To support the University of Greenwich's employability objectives, students studying on a Sandwich course will be charged a fee of £1,000 during their placement year.

3.2.5 Foundation Degrees

Foundation degrees and HNC/Ds delivered in collaboration within partner colleges or on campus will attract a fee of £6,000.

3.2.6 Initial Teacher Training fees

The fees for the Initial Teacher Training programme will be aligned to the cost of an Honours degree at £9,000 for the academic year.

All fees in this Access Agreement are subject to an inflationary increase for 2015-16, and an annual inflationary increase thereafter, based on the appropriate inflationary measure set by the government each year. Fees for entrants for earlier years are governed by the Access Agreement governing the relevant year of entry.

3.3 Fee income and institutional access agreement spend

The total spend in 2015-16 on access, student success and progression is projected at £6.7m of which 41% is OFFA countable. In addition, £3.6m will be allocated to financial support for students.

Factors that have been taken into account in determining spend on access, student success and retention measures include:-

- Changes to Student Opportunity and Access to Learning Funding streams in 2014-15;
- The University's success in achieving most of its widening participation targets to date and in many cases exceeding its benchmarks, but recognising the need to continue long term outreach activities in schools and colleges to sustain its success in aiding students from widening participation backgrounds to progress to university;
- A commitment to spend at least 22% of the additional fee income over £6,000 to meet our targets, which will be achieved incrementally;
- To shift the balance of expenditure between 2013-14 to 2016-17 from financial support and outreach work to activities centred on improving student success and retention. By 2016-17 the percentage of expenditure on retention and on-course support will have risen to 35% of the OFFA countable funding from a planned commitment of 22% in 2013-14;
- The total estimated expenditure in 2015-16 will be £6.4m that reflects our commitments made in the Access Agreements of earlier years, modified to take account of actual and planned student recruitment;
- The increase in retention rates to 89% represents an improvement of 4.8% over the past three years highlighting that the re-profiling of spend towards student success has been beneficial. Further refinement of the spend will occur in 2015-16 to enhance the progression of undergraduate learners into employment and postgraduate study.

- NSP matched funding from 2014-15 of £1.9m will be targeted in 2015-16 to a new programme, Greenwich Scholarship Programme, aimed at students from low household incomes.

4.0 Access, student success and progression approach

The university continues to be at the forefront of outreach and access activity regionally and nationally. Our strategic priority is for the continuing improvement of retention rates to meet the targets in the university's 2012-17 Strategic Plan to maximise student success and progression. The access agreement targets in section 5 and Table 7 are thus aligned to the University's strategic plan.

Changes to Student Opportunity and Access to Learning Funding streams have led the University to review student success activities in 2014. Because of these changes a broad approach has been outlined below, that reflects our long term strategic goals, ensuring our aim of participation with success remains the primary focus. This approach will be further defined by a new Strategy for Access and Student Success 2014-2018 to be developed over the coming months. The governance of our widening participation work has been strengthened by the formation of the University's Strategy for Access and Student Success working group, which has representation from all faculties, offices and student union, and will be responsible for overseeing the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of all access, student success and progression interventions, including those that have already commenced.

4.1 Retention, success and progression

Considering our success at recruiting students from underrepresented groups, the University of Greenwich will reinvest 22% of the fee income above the basic fee level (totalling £6.4m), aligned to guidance from the Office for Fair Access. The focus of this funding will be towards retention, progression and success activity that will enable us to influence absolute social mobility and ensure that our students are positioned to gain high profile careers. We are aware of the success profile of our students from disadvantaged and ethnic minority groups, which are similar to national trends, outlined in the HEFCE report Differences in Degree Outcomes. The university is keen to ensure that our students are not adversely affected by the disadvantage they face. Our approach will be:

1. Further improve the number of students not in HE following recent success. As part of the restructuring of the University in 2013, Directors of Student Experience in each of the Faculties were appointed in the 2013-14, who have a remit to sustain and further improve our retention rates. The University will continue with a range of the current retention interventions that are considered effective, such as: acceptors portal; personal tutoring and supporting students with particular protected characteristics. Nurturing a culture of belonging within the academic and social community has been a particular focus of our work that begins prior to arrival at university, during the initial stages and throughout the students' time at university and when they become alumni. New interventions are being considered aimed at enhancing our use and range of student analytics to better target "at risk" students and expanding the study skills support;
2. Developing a new range of interventions to enhance employment outcomes and progression to post graduate study. We will continue with our holistic approach and build on existing employability-enhancing activities that have ranged from: curriculum renewal and work-

related learning; the implementation of co-curricula awards; student union activities aligned with Greenwich graduate attributes and the Reed ncfce partnership that assists students with all aspects of the job-finding process and are also involved in establishing new links with employers based around volunteering, placements and internships that provide valuable work experience. Our aim is to increase the employability of students, ensuring that the University is above the sector average in the DLHE and that internal progression to postgraduate study increases, where appropriate;

3. Increase the number of students awarded a degree. Increasing the number of students who complete their degree and achieve a 1st or 2.1 degree classification continues to be a strategic priority. We will continue with our programme of transforming and enriching curricula and programme delivery aimed at ensuring each student achieves to their full potential;
4. Sustain the number of students classified as disadvantaged using a range of indicators: number of state school students; percentage of students from low participation neighbourhoods and number of students from NS SEC 4-7 groups. Maintaining our long term outreach work remains a priority for the university (see Section 4.3). This will continue to be achieved by collaborating with schools and colleges that have a high proportion of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

4.2 Financial support for students

4.2.1 Financial support for students will be targeted at groups such as care leavers and students from low income households ensuring that funding to facilitate success is not a barrier. Over 50% of our students are in receipt of full state support with a household income of £25k or less and student surveys have identified that finance is of particular concern to this group. We have targeted financial support towards learning resources and digital devices to encourage on-course achievement. The possibility of extending this to other forms of support, such as travel, is under review. The Student Union has supported an emphasis on financial support and the following measures will be adopted:

1. The Greenwich Scholarship Programme (GSP) is targeted at honours degree students from low income households (less than £25,000) paying a fee in excess £6,000. A total of £1.9m is available to provide financial support to students in the first year of their study. Funding of £2,000 per full-time student is available in the form of a £1,000 fee waiver, a £200 voucher and £800 in-kind support, with the value of the voucher and in-kind support credited to a smart card. Part-time students will receive the pro-rated fee waiver only based on credits studied. Students must have made the university their firm choice by the May 2015 deadline. Other criteria apply with full details available on the University's website.
2. The Access Scholarship* offers funding of £500 credited to a smart card for full-time students studying an honours degree and in receipt of full state support that have not been able to access the Greenwich Scholarship Programme. Funding is made up of the £200 Aspire@Greenwich bursary (see below) supplemented by an additional £300 voucher. Part-time students will also be eligible for the Access Scholarship that will be pro-rata on the basis of the number of credits studied. This is a single award which will be payable in the first year of study only.
3. The Care Leaver Bursary* of £1,000 per year is payable for a maximum of three years and part-time eligible students will receive this on a pro-rata basis. Payment in subsequent years is

dependent on satisfactory progression and payment in a placement year is dependent on the placement being unpaid. In addition to the annual award, students will receive £100 in their final year towards the costs of attendance at the graduation ceremony. This bursary is not means-tested, but students are required to be in receipt of full student support.

4. The Aspire@Greenwich Bursary* Full-time home/EU undergraduate students starting programmes in 2015–16 charging the £9,000 fee and not in receipt of an Access Scholarship will be provided with a £200 smart card to be spent against learning resources to encourage investment in their personal development. This is a single award which will be payable in the first year of study only.

* For full details of our scholarships and bursaries and qualifying criteria please visit our web page: <http://www2.gre.ac.uk/study/finance/undergraduate/scholarships>

4.3 Outreach measures

4.3.1 Participation with success remains the primary goal of the university's access approach. Our aim is to take a whole student lifecycle approach to widening participation which begins with our work with primary schools, through to supporting the achievement and transition of key stage 5 learners into undergraduate progression. This will begin by enhancing critical thinking, literacy skills and aspirations of primary school learners to prepare them for success at key stage 2. We will be working with primary schools that feed into our WP partner secondary schools and colleges who will continue the development of academic literacy and career development skills through key stages 3, 4 and 5 enabling appropriate HE choices, plus enhanced success and transition.

4.3.2 The long term goals of our outreach work are that more WP students will apply to higher education from our partner schools and colleges. These institutions are selected on the basis of having low progression to HE and a large proportion of students from underrepresented backgrounds. The success of our interventions will be measured by the number and percentage of WP students from each partner institution who have engaged in our outreach activity and apply and accept a place at university, which will be monitored using data from the Higher Education Access and Tracker service that we subscribe to. The focus of our work is on academic skills needed for success at key stages 2,3,4 and 5. The types of interventions being used in our outreach work have been designed to extend our range beyond our local partners, making them scalable to a wider audience.

4.3.3 Our approach utilises workbooks, e-learning resources and CPD for professional staff to enable high volume delivery. Where appropriate, these interventions will be supported by our student ambassadors. Examples of some of our projects are:-

1. Skills for Independent Learning, a short course to support the achievement of partner schools and colleges by building learner's academic literacy skills. The course is being offered to new level 3 learners. Pilot studies have been delivered in the 2012-13 academic year and many have continued to use the course into 2013-14. All of our partner schools are close to their GCSE Floor Targets with many students achieving a C grade highlighting the demand for this stretch and challenge work;
2. We will continue to use, and where possible expand, student ambassador support for improving the GCSE achievement of year 11 students in our partner schools/colleges. Past research and evaluations have demonstrated enhanced maths attainment from using Ambassador support as measured by GCSE grades obtained;

3. The university will continue to work with disabled students in local schools to support achievement and progression. This work will be delivered by specially trained student ambassadors who will work with targeted groups in partner schools and colleges; evaluation has already seen many disabled students progress to HE based on the support received;
4. Extending vocational opportunities for up-skilling in the region and attracting non-traditional students to engage in HE learning. This will be achieved by increasing the work based learning offer through our Springboard to Learning and Applied Professional Studies programmes and working in partnership with employers and professional bodies to professionalise those sectors without coherent progression routes;
5. Collaboration with local authorities and the Department of Education to develop University Technology Colleges. Our first UTC Royal Greenwich opened in Woolwich in 2013 and a second UTC in Medway (Chatham), specialising in construction and engineering, is due to open in 2015. Success will be measured through progression to HE STEM courses.
6. Blooming Minds: the university has piloted a course for years 4, 5 and 6 primary school students to develop critical thinking, active learning and the confidence to articulate an argument. This course has been written up into a student and teacher resource for 2014-15 and the university will support local primary schools to deliver this initiative. Success will be measured by average year 6 Standardised Assessment Test results;
7. Ensuring that pre-entry learners make informed choices about their careers and education is supported by our Personal Development Planning course, which identifies the employability skills that employers are seeking and enhances their ability to research a career;

These interventions are complemented by our annual calendar of activities, taster events and range of summer schools.

4.4 Collaborative outreach targets and partnership working

4.4.1 Through our extensive outreach work we will continue our excellent relationships with schools and colleges. As these relationships develop further, we are working to agree collaborative targets to increase the number of WP students from low participation neighbourhood backgrounds with the potential to succeed at university and to progress in a timely manner.

4.4.2 The university maintains a strong commitment to unbiased outreach activity, contributing to the needs of the region. This is evidenced in projects such as Linking London where the university continues to drive forward the collection and application of progression data in further education colleges, which has informed recruitment strategies in a range of institutions across London. We are also continuing our involvement in a variety of post Aimhigher organisations, including AccessHE, a London Higher membership group.

4.4.3 Our work with younger age groups is highlighted by our collaboration with the Kent Children's University, where we deliver and support on campus activity to build the aspirations of younger learners who do not traditionally have a family history of HE participation.

4.4.3 Subscribing to the Higher Education Access and Tracker (HEAT) service the University is working collaboratively with 20 HEIs. This collaborative work is beginning to shape the national approach to monitoring and evaluation of widening participation interventions.

5.0 Targets and milestones

5.1 We will maintain our previous success of recruiting from under-represented groups with a greater emphasis on ensuring that such students are given the support to succeed at the university. A number of targets will be used to monitor the impact of widening access activity at the university:

1. Stay at or above benchmarks for the numbers of students from state schools and colleges, as shown in HESA Table 1b
2. Stay at or above HEFCE locally adjusted benchmarks for the number of students from NE-SEC classes 4, 5, 6 and 7, as shown in HESA Table 1b
3. Ensuring that the undergraduate student population, including the proportion of black and minority ethnic students at the university is as a minimum representative of the populations in London and Kent. Currently 48% of the university student population are from ethnic minorities, compared to 29% in London and 7% in Kent.

5.2 The key priority of the institution as outlined in our Strategic Plan 2012-17 is to enhance retention and achievement of undergraduate students at the university and seek to position the University of Greenwich close to the national average for all English universities.

Our targets are as follows:

1. A reduction in non-continuation following year of entry of full-time first degree entrants. The target is to reduce non-continuation of students from 12% in 2011-12 to 7% by 2016–17.
2. An increase in the number of students being awarded a degree as shown in HESA Table 5 78% by 2016-17, +5% points from the baseline figure of 73% for 2009-10.
3. An improvement in the university's internal measure of student success, as determined by progression rates, by 10 percentage points in five years. The data used in monitoring this target will be taken from our HESA student return. The population will be all students who were active at any point between 1 December and 31 July in a session. Success will be based on the number of students who successfully completed their studies or were allowed to progress to the next stage of their studies.
4. Increasing the number of full-time students graduating with honours degree classifications of 1st and 2.1 from 61% in 2012-13 to 65% by 2017.
5. Student employability and further study (as measured by the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey) to be above the sector median (currently 90%) by 2017.

Milestones are detailed in Table 7.

6.0 Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

6.1 Monitoring of the activities outlined in this agreement will be primarily undertaken by the newly formed Strategy for Access and Student Success (SASS) working group. To ensure that a strategic, whole institutional approach is taken, the group has been formed of senior staff from each Faculty, Office and the Student's Union. The group will have a clear reporting line into senior staff by initially

reporting into our Student Experience Committee, who then report into Academic Council. The SASS working group is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Development) and is responsible for the completion of the Access Agreement. Additionally the evaluation of access, finance, student success and progression interventions will be overseen by the group.

6.2 The university is currently up-dating its Access and Student Success Strategy which will contain a clear evaluation plan for outreach and retention interventions delivered, and will be summarised in an annual review. Analysis to match monitoring data on our initiatives and activities with different groups of students will be undertaken by Planning and Statistics who will generate a statistical report. As our access and student success interventions become embedded, evaluation will disaggregate the impact on students with particular protected characteristics enabling additional support to be provided and targeted.

6.3 Analysis of our retention work, based on progression rates, will focus on those groups of students identified as the most likely to underachieve and withdraw from the university. Current evidence highlights that certain ethnic groups, that include white working class males are in the high risk categories. Students originating from the most HE underrepresented backgrounds using POLAR3 quintile 1 methodology will also be an on-going evaluation focus.

6.4 As part of our evaluation plan the success of WP students and all students covered by the Equality Act 2010 will be monitored and the percentage gaining a 1st or 2:1 will be used as a benchmark for targeting and annual comparison purposes.

6.5 The University has subscribed to the Higher Education and Access Tracker (HEAT) service and will be using this data to monitor applications and acceptances to HE from our partner schools. We will track the progression of those students who have participated in outreach activities into higher education which will form an annual measure of our success. Current progression rates of students who have participated in outreach events organised by the University stands at 34%.

6.6 To complement the quantitative data the university collects, we will also use qualitative feedback from staff and students at the university and in our partner institutions, e.g. new arrivals survey, programme monitoring reports and self-reflection on our courses. This feedback has been used in the past to enhance our provision and will continue to be used to improve the quality of our interventions and enhance the student experience.

7.0 Equality and diversity

7.1 The University publishes equality information annually which provides an overview of students with protected characteristics. Our Equality and Diversity report 2012-13 highlights that 1,553 of the total student population (22,519) had declared a disability, equating to 6.8% of the student population. The report also highlights variable levels of disability across Faculties which has led to specific interventions to support targeted groups, such as the Orientation Programme for students who enter with a disability on the autistic spectrum. The success and retention of students with specific disabilities groups, as well as those with particular protected characteristics is being monitored, and evaluation of all equality and diversity interventions will feed into our Access Strategy and Access Evaluation Review and be reported to Academic Council.

7.2 The university has developed this agreement with due regard to our responsibilities outlined in the Equality Act 2010. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed on the Access Agreement 2014-15, and is applicable to this agreement as no significant changes have occurred from

the previous year. The EIA identifies any adverse impacts on particular protected characteristics, and we are analysing it against all nine protected characteristics, as well as taking into consideration factors such as part-time working and caring responsibilities. We believe that this ensures the decision making and policies we implement are fully informed and do not disadvantage any group unintentionally. The results of the EIA's are discussed at the Equality and Diversity Committee enabling the university to reflect on the impact of the Agreement and take forward its recommendations. This Access Agreement has positively impacted on the institutional approach to equality and diversity by influencing current policies, however we acknowledge there is further work to be undertaken to achieve our goals in this area including a greater focus on protected characteristics at a Faculty level.

7.3 The university has a robust approach to equality of opportunity and aims to create an environment in which students and staff are selected and treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of sex, colour, ethnic or national origin, race, gender, gender identity, disability, mental health, HIV status, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, religious or other beliefs, trade union membership, marital status or family circumstances.

7.4 Our outreach work has a particular focus on the progression of disabled students into higher education. Our project, AccessAbility, works with disabled students in partner schools and colleges to support achievement and progression. This work is delivered by student ambassadors who have themselves declared a disability and we have received national recognition for this approach by being awarded the Two Ticks quality mark.

7.5 The university publishes equality information annually that covers both staff and students, where we analyse quantitative and qualitative data to show how we are meeting the public sector equality duty, which requires us to have due regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.. We annually review and publish our equality action plan, which allocates specific actions by Faculty and office. Where issues or under-representation is identified, we work with Faculties and offices to set SMART objectives to address the issues.

7.6 Using the specific retention activities mentioned earlier the university will target more groups which are at risk of under-achieving or leaving. Proposals contained within the agreement aim to support students through their student life cycle to increase success and employability.

8.0 Provision of information for prospective students

8.1 The university will provide fees information across a wide range of media platforms to ensure accessibility at all key touch points with students; this will mainly consist of our web site and on line prospectus. The information will be supported by Offices across the university, which will be integral in providing one-to-one information and support to students.

Additional support will be provided by the following methods:

- An online service for frequently asked questions;
- An online calculator;
- Online bursaries and scholarships information;

- Guidance and information on finance is made available throughout the year, at open days and talks are given in local schools and colleges. This work is being extended in 2013-14 and will be enhanced in 2014-15;
- An intensive communications campaign targeting all prospective students and clarifying their financial position.

8.2 For enrolled students the Student Finance and Financial Support (SFFS) team within the Office of Student Affairs will provide advice and guidance on student financial support and money management via a variety of self-service, remote access media, targeted events and face-to-face contact with students through our Matrix-accredited 'one-stop shop'. SFFS will also provide administrative support and guidance for the funds and bursaries available.

8.3 The student union, and in particular its team of student advisers, will also play an important role in providing additional support and advice to students about sources of information and help, including a union database for grants and funds. Information on union services will be widely available to students through the university's Student Centres.

9.0 Consulting with students

The President of the Students Union University of Greenwich (SUUG) and the Membership Services Manager are members of the newly formed Strategy for Access and Student Success working group. Discussions regarding the balance of activities and funding have taken place within the working group. SUUG has supported returning a substantial proportional of the additional fee income to students in need of financial assistance. Its preference has been for cash payments as distinct from targeted financial support towards learning resources aimed to encourage in-course achievement and fee waivers. However, the introduction of the targeted financial support was only initiated in 2013-14 and the earliest opportunity to evaluate its impact on student success and retention will be at the end of the current academic year 2013-14. Thus, on balance we are seeking to continue with the targeted support systems.