

Agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) 2012-2013¹

Teesside University has an outstanding track record on Widening Participation with 98.4% of new entrants coming from state schools and 28.8% from low participation neighbourhoods. The University has consistently performed better than its benchmarks and is nationally recognised as a sector leader in raising aspirations.

1. Fees Level

The University will charge the following fees for full-time undergraduate degrees:

£8,450 for programmes in
Science and Engineering
Design
Animation, Games and Computer Graphics
Web and Multimedia

£7,950 for programmes in
Computing
Psychology
Sport
Media
Fine Art
Social Work

£7,450 for programmes in
History
English
Law
Criminal Investigation
Sociology and Youth Studies
Education
Business

¹ This is a revision to the Access Agreement approved in July 2011. This revision has been made in the light of subsequent announcements about the funding of HE. Consultations have been held with representatives from the Students' Union and consideration has been given to the effect of these changed proposals on all students. The University will inform all applicants in writing of these changes within five working days of approval.

Performing Arts

Sandwich placements and study years abroad will have a tuition fee of 25% of the fee charged for an ordinary year of the programme.

For Foundation degrees and other undergraduate programmes the tuition fee will be £5,500 per annum.

It is anticipated that all fees will be increased, year on year, in line with the parameters defined by the government each year.

The details of estimated number of entrants at each fee level are given in Annexe B.²

2. Analysis of access and retention activities

The University has analysed the data relating to key performance indicators over the last six year period in respect of both access and retention activities. This analysis has been utilised to inform management decisions regarding; milestones and targets in each area; the appropriate level of funding to commit to target interventions; and the establishment of an evaluative framework for this activity.

2.1 Access

The University has an exemplary record in providing access to Higher Education for groups which have been under-represented in the past. It ranks 1st in the entire HE sector for young full-time entrants from low participation neighbourhoods and 8th of English universities for young full-time entrants from socio-economic classifications 4-7.

Over the last six years it has consistently exceeded its location adjusted benchmarks and exceeded the sector averages in **all** the following categories. The data for the last available year (09/10) is shown in the table below.

Access Performance Indicator	Location Benchmark %	09/10 %
T1a Young Full Time degree entrants		
<i>From state schools</i>	96.7	98.1
<i>From socio-economic classifications 4 to 7</i>	39.6	41.5
<i>From POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	23.8	27.0
T1b Young Full Time undergraduate entrants		
<i>From state schools</i>	97.0	98.4
<i>From socio-economic classifications 4 to 7</i>	41.1	42.8
<i>From POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	24.9	28.8
T2a Mature Full Time undergraduate entrants		
<i>First degree entrants</i>		
<i>% of entrants who are mature</i>	n/a	31.2
<i>% of mature who are from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods and have no experience of HE</i>	18.0	19.8

² In preparing this agreement the University has used a model based upon our anticipated student numbers without adjustment for any subsequent additional student numbers.

<i>All undergraduate courses</i>		
<i>% of entrants who are mature</i>	n/a	35.9
<i>% of mature who are from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods and have no experience of HE</i>	21.7	23.6

The only representation performance indicator in which the University has not exceeded its benchmark is

T7 Participation of students in receipt of DSAs	5.5 *	4.8
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* not location adjusted

2.2 Retention

Retention is a more complex and demanding area for the University with no clear trends to account for the variability in performance against T3a and T5.

T3a Non-Continuation Following Year of Entry

The University currently exceeds its benchmark, although during the last six years performance has been variable. Closer analysis reveals that the record with mature entrants is excellent, but it is less consistent with young entrants.

T5 Projected Learning outcome

In the projected 'Degree' outcome the University had, in the past, dipped below its benchmark, but has now returned to a position where it currently exceeds it.

In the projected 'Other Award' outcome, the University figure has consistently been significantly above the benchmark figure. This has reflected the University's mission, values and practice which are reflected in the Learning and Teaching Assessment Strategy which aimed to recognise student achievement.

The University adopted an internal 'Overall positive outcomes' measure in T5 (which united 'Degree', 'Other Award' and 'Transfer to other HEI' in a single measure.) Performance against this benchmark has been consistently good.

The University has performed considerably better than its benchmark in the 'Neither Award nor Transfer' category.

The data for the last available year (08/09) is shown.

Retention Performance Indicators	Benchmark %	08/09 %
T3a Non continuation following year of entry		
<i>Full time first degree entrants</i>		
<i>Young entrants</i>		
<i>Continuing or qualifying</i>	n/a	89.6
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	9.3	8.3
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	n/a	2.1
<i>Mature entrants</i>		
<i>Continuing or qualifying</i>	n/a	88.5
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	13.6	11.0
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	n/a	0.5

<i>All entrants</i>		
<i>Continuing or qualifying</i>	n/a	89.2
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	10.7	9.2
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	n/a	1.6
T5 Projected Learning Outcomes		
<i>Full time first degree</i>		
<i>Degree</i>	73.3	74.2
<i>Other Award</i>	4.1	11.0
<i>Transfer to another HEI</i>	6.2	3.8
<i>Neither Award nor Transfer</i>	16.4	11.0

2.3 Conclusion

The University has invested significant resources in access and retention activities in recent years and will continue to do so.

Based on the preceding analysis and commentary, the University can demonstrate an excellent record on access and a satisfactory performance in retention, when measured against external benchmarks. However, when overall recognition of student achievement (*'Other Award'*) is factored in, the University's performance is stronger still.

3. Expenditure on additional access and retention activities

The University is committed to

- improving its performance on retention, and
- maintaining a sustainable and effective outreach programme, and
- enhancing the quality of the student experience and the student support infrastructure.

To achieve this, the University will commit 38.5% of the additional fee income to

- student financial support - including the National Scholarship Programme (NSP), and
- new additional activities to maintain fair access, and
- new activities to improve retention, student success and employability.

In the **first year** of this scheme it is anticipated that the University will receive £12.35m from additional fees income (both 'old' and 'new' system). The University will spend

- £1.40m on bursaries for students under previous commitments identified in earlier OFFA agreements;
- £395k on activities continuing from the 2011-12 OFFA agreement;
- £345k on matching the government's contribution to full-time students under the NSP;
- £110k on enhancing the value of NSPs;
- £120k on new outreach activities;
- £525k on the provision of other scholarships
- £760k (from an overall commitment of £1.1m) on additional activities on retention, student success and employability relating to underrepresented groups.

The University will also spend £400k in 2011/12 to address potential applicants' concerns about the new funding system, and to build its capacity to support retention, student success and employability. The University would want this activity to be considered as a component of its spend in the first year of this agreement.

This is a total commitment of £4.05m or 32.8% in the first year of this agreement.

By 2014-15, it is anticipated that this will have changed and the projected additional fees income will be £11.37m .

The University will spend

- £78k on bursaries for students under previous commitments;
- £395k on activities continuing from the 2011-12 OFFA agreement;
- £1.035m on matching the government's contribution to full-time students under the NSP;
- £330k on enhancing the value of NSPs;
- £120k on new outreach activity;
- £1.42m on additional scholarships;

- £1m (from an overall commitment of £1.5m) on additional activities on retention, student success and employability relating to underrepresented groups.

This is a total commitment of £4.38m– or 38.5%.

4. Targets and Milestones

4.1 Access Targets

The University will maintain its current access record at a minimum of 1% above its benchmark in all the following performance indicators relating to access,

- T1a Young full time degree entrants
From state schools or colleges
From socio-economic classifications 4 to 7
From POLAR low participation neighbourhoods*
- T1b Young full time undergraduate entrants
From state schools or colleges
From socio-economic classifications 4 to 7
From POLAR low participation neighbourhoods*
- T2a Mature full time undergraduate entrants
First degree entrants
Entrants with no previous HE experience and from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods
All undergraduate entrants
Entrants with no previous HE experience and from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods*

Additionally, the University will place particular emphasis on maintaining and enhancing its performance in the following key indicators:

- T1b from socio-economic classifications 4-7
from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods*
- T2 % entrants to all undergraduate courses who are mature*
- T7 Percentage of students in receipt of DSAs*

This emphasis is consistent with the performance indicators that the University has used in its Widening Participation Strategic Assessment for HEFCE.

The University will commit to improving its absolute performance against these indicators over the period of this agreement.

In the case of T7, the University will aim to move to above its benchmark and increase the proportion of disabled students in receipt of DSAs to 6.5% by 2017. This is consistent with the overall access targets of 1% above benchmark.

In the case of the two indicators in T1b and T2a, the University already exceeds its benchmark by considerably more than 1%. The University will aim to improve upon this already outstanding performance.

This will be a challenging task because of

- The withdrawal of a universal and clear entitlement to Education Maintenance Allowance, and
- The debt-adverseness of these potential applicants,³ and
- Additional challenges to the enrolment of mature adults.

³. Attitudes to Debt, Claire Callender (2003) (UUK)

The University believes that there may be a dip in its performance against these targets in the early years of this agreement until the new funding system has been established and the outcomes of the additional work that the University plans have become apparent. By the end of this period the University intends to have recovered and improved upon its position.

Access Performance Indicator targets	Location Benchmark %	09/10 %	Target 2017 %
T1b Young full time undergraduate entrants			
<i>from socio-economic classifications 4-7</i>	41.1	42.8	45
<i>from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	24.9	28.8	30
T2a Mature full time undergraduate entrants			
<i>Entrants with no previous HE experience and from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	21.7	23.6	24
T7 Percentage of students in receipt of DSAs	5.5	4.8	6.5

4.2 Retention Targets

The latest available data (2008/09) indicates that the University's position is improving. The University is committed to achieving further improvement in this area through a targeted focus on student experience, progression, achievement and employability.

Targeted retention activities will be specifically focussed on

- supporting transition through the student life cycle,
- building personal and academic confidence and competence,
- the development of supportive social networks and team working skills, and
- the acquisition of employability, enterprise and interpersonal skills.

In relation to T3a, the University aims to improve the retention of new entrant first degree students at the end of the first year to 91% by 2016/17 (which will relate to the 2014/15 cohort); and to reduce the percentage 'not found' at any HEI to 8% within the same period.

Furthermore, the University will seek to adjust the balance between elements of the projected outcomes for first degree entrants (T5) by

- increasing the percentage of students achieving an intended first degree from the 2008/09 level of 74.2% to 80% by 2017;

- reducing the percentage achieving an 'other award' from 11% to 7%; and
- reducing the percentage leaving 'without an award' or 'transferring' from 11% to 9% within the same time frame.

Retention Performance Indicators	Benchmark %	08/09 %	Target 2017 %
T3a Non continuation following year of entry			
<i>Full time first degree entrants</i>			
<i>All entrants</i>			
<i>Continuing or qualifying</i>	n/a	89.2	91.0
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	10.7	9.2	8.0
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	n/a	1.6	1.0
T5 Projected Learning Outcomes			
<i>Full time degree entrants</i>			
<i>Degree</i>	73.3	74.2	80.0
<i>Other Award</i>	4.1	11.0	7.0
<i>Transfer to another HEI</i>	6.2	3.8	4.0
<i>Neither Award nor Transfer</i>	16.4	11.0	9.0

4.3 Milestones in Years of Agreement

The data available in any access agreement year will relate to an earlier cohort and this table indicates the year in which the cohort started.

Access Agreement Year	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
Cohort Start Year	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
T7 In receipt of DSAs	5.0	5.3	5.6	6.0	6.5

Access Agreement Year	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
Cohort Start Year	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
T3a Continuing or qualifying following year of entry	89.5	89.75	90.0	90.5	91.0
T5 Projects learning outcomes					
<i>Degree</i>	74.5	75.0	76.0	78.0	80.0
<i>Other Award</i>	10.6	10.3	9.6	8.3	7.0
<i>Transfer to another HEI</i>	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
<i>Neither Award nor Transfer</i>	10.9	10.7	10.4	9.7	9.0

5. Additional Activities

5.1 Outreach

The University will build upon its investment in sustainable targeted outreach activities which raise aspirations and support progression into Higher Education from low participation neighbourhoods, particularly within the Tees Valley.

This work has included substantial collaboration with the FE sector, Sixth Form Colleges and feeder schools in order to raise the aspirations and participation of those who have the potential to succeed in and benefit from Higher Education and who come from lower socio-economic groups and low participation neighbourhoods. This work will be extended under this new agreement – in particular to develop strong relationships with the new University sponsored academies⁴, to develop aspirations raising work and transition support for disabled learners, and to extend work to demystify the new student funding arrangements.

5.1.1 Continuing Activities

The University will continue activities to which it is already committed through existing OFFA agreements such as

- Widening participation activities, including Open Days, Discovery Days, Passport Plus, and Mentoring Schemes.
- Financial information, advice and guidance for applicants to support applicants through the process.
- Dedicated support for Care-leavers and additional resources in University Schools to support underrepresented applicants.

5.1.2 New Activities

- Working with the University sponsored Academies and their Secondary and Primary 'feeder' schools to develop and deliver a programme of joint activity to support and enhance student experience, progression and success and to enhance recruitment.
- The maintenance of network activities aimed at nurturing partnership work to support 'raising aspirations' which have previously been supported by Aim Higher.
- An enhanced focus on raising the aspirations of disabled learners and supporting their transition into HE.
- The introduction of trained student ambassadors to work with partner Schools and Colleges.
- Enhancement of careers advisors, parental and employer engagement activities.
- Enhanced multi-media information on fees and the NSP scheme options.
- Increased provision of information, advice and guidance to potential applicants and their influencers about the funding arrangements for students.

4

Freebrough and Thornaby Academies draw 84.4% and 91.6% of their intake from areas defined as amongst the most deprived 40% in the country in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

5.2 Retention and Student Success

This will be the main focus for the University's activity during the time of this agreement as reflected in the funding commitment profile.

The key aim is to enhance student retention and success and to develop student employability. The University will build on the best practice identified in pilot initiatives and extend and embed practice from these initiatives across all academic programmes.

The University conducts an annual systematic and thorough review of its performance in retention, student success and employability. This examines data at programme level and looks at performance by type of student.

In its 2011 review this process will be extended to include the development of strategic University and School based action plans which will

- address specific areas of concern;
- consider the specific outcomes for students from underrepresented groups;
- identify potential areas for enhancement of the student experience and student success; and
- establish a framework for the further development of student employability.

An important component of these plans will be enhanced scrutiny and monitoring which will inform both the future development of the action plans and the evaluation of the Access Agreement. The intention will be that developments are embedded into the curriculum and learning and teaching practice.

The indicative additional activities identified below will be developed to support the implementation of these action plans and may be delivered as an element of a School's plan, and as stand-alone activities intended to address the needs of particular groups of cross-university students.

The University plans to spend £1.5m on additional activities relating to retention, student success and employability by 2014/15.

£250k of this additional expenditure relates to measures which will directly support underrepresented groups (additional support for disabled students and students with complex needs; pre-arrival activities for disabled, mature and first-generation students; additional induction activities for mature students; the development of peer-mentoring schemes for 'vulnerable' students.)

The remaining £1.25m will be used to enhance the success of all students.

Data from the Student Loans Company indicates that approximately 60% of Teesside students come from households where the income level is below the threshold which means that they receive an element of grant. The University and OFFA have used this as an indicator of students who are 'countable' under these agreements. This means an additional expenditure of £750k.

This would mean a total £1m of additional expenditure in this agreement on the engagement and success of students from underrepresented groups.

There are three interrelated strands to these new activities.

Strand One – Skills Development

This strand recognises the importance of students acquiring effective life and learning skills. It seeks to supplement existing activity by greater support for the delivery of these skills within the curriculum and by the establishment of a complementary programme of activities and services intended to broaden opportunities and address specific issues with particular groups.

The focus of this strand is on the transition into HE and the development of 'self' in terms of confidence, team working, leadership, interpersonal and other skills such as time management. It also focuses on academic enabling skills including study and presentation skills and information literacy and management.

Activities will include:

- Pre-sessional workshops and modules to help students develop their skills and identify their own learning styles. (Targeted at - but not limited to - students from low participation neighbourhoods, disabled students and mature entrants);
- Engaging students in developing mutually supportive learning and social communities;
- Recognising and supporting the contribution to personal development provided through engagement with extra-curricular activities, and developing confidence, self-esteem and other skills through leadership and motivational activities; and
- Enhancing the learning hub in the Library to support students in developing their academic and problem solving skills, and ensuring effective liaison between this and skills development activities in Schools.

Strand Two – Enhanced Student Experience

This strand is focussed on improving retention and progression by increasing the engagement of students with their programme and peers; and by providing easy access to effective support mechanisms.

Activities will include:

- Strengthening current induction processes with additional programme based events and by the addition of targeted activities for particular groups;
- Establishing a peer assisted learning programme and extending peer mentoring programmes;
- Delivering more intensive support for students with complex needs;
- Enhancing transitional support programmes for all returning students; and
- Establishing an electronic one-stop-shop for students and applicants to access information about University and other support and interactive self-help materials.

Strand Three – Achievement, Employability and Entrepreneurship

This strand is concerned with enhancing and extending opportunities for students to develop and practice skills which will enable them to succeed after their studies. It complements, and is related, to the University's work on employability and enterprise.

Activities will include:

- Implementing a structured programme of work experience including action based learning in work settings; project based placements, extended volunteering opportunities and graduate internships. All of these will be supported by clear processes which enable students to reflect and learn from their experience and identify the skills that they have developed as a consequence of it.
- Extending and enhancing Employability week events and other targeted activities.
- Supporting the development of enterprise skills in students and supporting social and economic entrepreneurship.
- Providing support for all unemployed or underemployed graduates for one year after graduation to assist in updating and maintenance of their employability skills.

6. Financial Support for Students

6.1 Continuing Students

Students who began their studies under previous Access Agreements with OFFA will continue to receive the bursaries as set out in those Agreements.

For students who commenced in 2010/11, the terms are:

- Students with a household income of £31,000 p.a. or less on entry will receive a bursary of £750 per year of study.⁵
- Students who come to the University from a care background will be given an additional bursary of £1,000 per year of study.

For students who commenced in 2011/12, the terms are:

- Students with a household income of £31,000 p.a. or less on entry will receive a bursary of £500 per year of study.
- Students who come to the University from a care background will be given an additional bursary of £1,075 per year of study.

These bursaries will be payable to all full-time home and EU students who are liable for tuition fees at the full rate of £3,375 and who meet the above criteria. All bursaries will be paid in cash and these bursaries will rise in line with inflation throughout the period of study.

The household income used to determine bursary allocations will be taken directly from the income provided for the assessment of student support funding provided through the HEBSS system.

6.2 New Students 2012/13

The University's financial support for students commencing their studies in 2012/13 will be provided through the National Scholarship Programme (NSP), for both full and part-time undergraduate students.

The University has calculated that 63% of its NSP allocation relates to full-time students. This is equivalent to £345,000 before matched funds are applied.

The University will match this contribution and add additional funding to provide 200 scholarships of £4,000 each. The University will specify how it will match the funding for part-time students subsequently.

Scholarships will be available to students who are paying fees above £6,000 on three or four year first degree courses (excluding NHS students).

Students will be eligible if they have a household income below £25,000

Priority will be given to applicants who:

- are from a POLAR low participation neighbourhood;
- have a household income below £16,000;
- meet, in full, the academic conditions of any offer from the University;

⁵ The value of the bursary is stated at the rate that applied on entry. All bursaries have been increased by inflation and will continue to be, according to the terms established by the relevant agreements.

- applied in the main cycle;
- firmly accepted their offer from the University.

Successful students will receive a cash bursary of £1,000 (payable in three equal instalments), and a fee waiver of £3,000.

Other Scholarships

350 scholarships will be available for new entrants in 2012 to undergraduate three year programmes where fees above £6,000 are payable. These will be in the form of a £1500 fee-waiver for each year of study throughout the course. They will be available to students who have a household income which means that they receive an element of grant in their funding (currently £42,600) and who

- have an excellent academic record,
- and/or
- are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowances

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The University will monitor and report on its access, retention and achievement statistics at the relevant School and University level committees at predetermined points in the academic year. These reports will draw on both quantitative and qualitative data at subject and course level utilising internal and externally validated data sets. They will inform the future development of action plans.

The University will produce a report in November of each year for inclusion in the HEFCE Annual monitoring statements of HEIs which will draw upon:

- An analysis of the HEFCE performance indicators identified above;
- A commentary on the additional outreach activity against the defined milestones.

The report will be presented to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive and to the University's Board of Governors.

The operational management of matters relating to this agreement will be the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Student Experience).

8. Information for Students

The University will continue to ensure that all prospective students are informed of the aggregate amount of fees that the institution will charge for the completion of the course.

The University will expand its provision of Information, Advice and Guidance to ensure that potential applicants are aware of how the student funding system works and how it will affect them.

The provision of information to students will complement the existing highly respected and successful forms of advice and guidance.

The University will communicate with potential applicants in the following ways.

- Face to face activities through the recruitment team at Higher Education Fairs, Parents' Evenings and Careers and Options events – locally, regionally and nationally.
- Targeted applicant support communications using on-line and digital media.
- Information directly into Schools via local, regional and national mailings for distribution to students.
- Development of web-based information for key influencers such as parents and subject teachers, FAQs etc.
- Development of the University website to include Key Information Sets for the use of key influencers and prospective applicants.
- Information and events targeted at professionals in the advice and guidance and subject specialists (Heads of Sixth Forms/Heads of Careers/Subject Teachers).
- Standard printed and on-line publications which reach a wide audience e.g. prospecti and newsletters, course specific information.
- Pre-entry activities delivered into schools/colleges and on-campus via our Passport Scheme e.g. Discovery Days, Lecture Series, Transition activities, Open Days, Applicant Open Days and Visit Days.

The University has introduced a student funding element into all information and pre-entry activities and has enhanced its provision of individual advice and guidance to applicants through the extension of its financial advice services. This provides additional information about the costs of study (including tuition and living costs), the availability of funding to support study and support in developing money management skills.

