

Agreement with the Office for Fair Access Full Time Students 2015-2016

Introduction

This OFFA agreement covers students who start on full time courses in the academic year 2015-16.

This agreement is, of necessity, less specific than some of its predecessors. There are two principal reasons for this:

- The University is currently engaged in a revision of its Institutional Plan which will determine its size, shape, character and strategic direction for the period 2015-2020, and
- The Higher Education sector faces a period of volatility and change combined with reductions in Student Opportunity Funding. These are likely to have considerable impact on a University such as Teesside which has a history of excellent work in providing opportunity.

The University would wish to maintain a capacity for flexibility in the implementation of this agreement and feels that such a capacity would be compromised by too detailed and specific commitments at this stage.

It remains committed to building upon its excellent work in access and retention and student success and this agreement sets out the institutional context for that and establishes the University's priorities.

That commitment is evidenced as follows:

- The University has an outstanding track record on access with 98.8% of new full-time entrants coming from state schools and 26.2% from low participation neighbourhoods. The University has consistently performed better than its benchmarks and is nationally recognised as a sector leader in raising aspirations.
- The University has continued to make substantial improvements in all of its performance indicators which relate to retention and student success.
- The University has increased the percentage of students receiving DSAs from 4.8% in 2009/10 to 7.4% in 2012/13.

1. Institutional Context

The context for the University's activities is formed by the analysis of its performance over recent years outlined in Section 2. It is also formed by the University's Institutional Plan, Equal Opportunities Policy and Equality Action Plan, and by the primary university strategies.

The work outlined in this agreement aligns with these strategies.

Institutional Plan

Teesside University aims to be a caring, fair and supportive institution where everyone takes a shared pride in its mission and achievements.

The University seeks to optimise and enhance the experience of its staff, students, partners and external clients by:

- encouraging and embracing diversity, equality of access, esteem and opportunity, and actively opposing and eradicating prejudice
- empowering individuals to develop themselves and enhance their contribution to the future aims and strategic direction of the University
- communicating openly and effectively in all directions
- being open, transparent, honest and reflective
- valuing teamwork and the expertise and contribution of individuals
- celebrating and promoting individual contributions, and the achievements and wider successes of the University
- working proactively and flexibly with all stakeholders and the wider community
- working in partnership to welcome, own and adapt to change
- fostering creativity, innovation and enterprise
- being committed to sustainability and protecting our environment.

Academic Strategy

The University's vision is:

To achieve regional, national and international recognition as the UK's leading university for working with business, and to be among the UK's top institutions of HE in relation to:

- being a vibrant and effective learning community with students at the heart of everything that we do
- enhancing academic and professional standards, and producing highly employable graduates for the benefit of individuals and organisations
- contributing effectively to the economic, social and cultural success of the communities that we serve
- demonstrating a real and continuing commitment to social inclusion.

This academic strategy will ensure that Teesside University is recognised for its commitment to the student experience by the provision of:

- high-quality, innovative teaching
- supportive learning environments
- opportunities for positive engagement with industry, communities, enterprise and research activities, which will produce highly employable graduates and postgraduates.

Learning Teaching and Student Experience Strategy

The Strategy states:

The University experience, whatever its guise is one in which learning happens in many ways outside the formal curricula. This new strategy therefore seeks to acknowledge that wider set of potential learning opportunities, create new learning opportunities and develop a culture in which all engagements become possible spaces in which learning can happen. We seek to develop a culture in which students engage fully with their own learning and development and all staff are concerned with the learning of each individual student in whatever capacity they interact. The clear goal of striving for all our students to become confident, critical, creative, adaptable, articulate and aspiring will be the key to finding ways of individually as well as collectively enhancing the students' experiences.

Equality and Diversity

The University believes individuals should be able to achieve their full potential. Within the University this means providing development opportunities and removing barriers.

Our commitment to Equality and Diversity is reflected in our values of:

- encouraging and embracing diversity, equality of access, esteem and opportunity and actively opposing and eradicating prejudice
- empowering individuals to develop themselves and enhance their contribution to the future aims and strategic direction of the University
- communicating openly and effectively in all directions
- being open, transparent, honest and reflective

The University's policy and strategy framework therefore identifies characteristics of student success; establishes targets and performance indicators; and maintains a commitment to ensuring equality and diversity.

These objectives will be served by the fostering of a diverse and supportive environment for students alongside specific and targeted interventions intended to address the particular needs of groups with specific characteristics.

Collaboration

Teesside University has an established collaborative network with all the Tees Valley FE Colleges (The Higher Education Business Partnership) and Sixth Form Colleges; and also works extensively across the primary and secondary schools sector within the Tees Valley in terms of outreach activities. A particular emphasis is placed on working with sponsored Academies and their 'feeders' in relation to this work.

Additionally, the University has extended its HE in FE College network to include FE Colleges from across the North East region. This supports the enhancement of networks and enriches outreach and student success activities through the sharing of best practice and resources.

The University is not currently part of any formal collaboration at HE level. Operationally University staff belong to organisations which support access and student success, NEON, NASMA, HELOA, NORTHCLASS (a collaboration of Northern HEI's and local authorities to support Care Leavers) and the Buttle Trust and through these organisations work with colleagues across the sector.

2. Fees Levels

Full Time 2015-16

- The University will charge £9,000 a year for full-time undergraduate degrees.
- Sandwich placements and study years abroad will be free.
- For Foundation degrees and other undergraduate programmes the tuition fee will be £6,000 per annum.
- Fees for the first year of degree programmes with a foundation level year will be £6,000 instead of the normal fee of £9,000. The fourth year of MEng programmes will also be discounted from £9,000 to £4,500.

Fees will be increased in line with guidance rules established by the government each year.

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

Part - Time 2015-16

The University is committed to ensuring that no part-time student following a programme in a manner as designed and intended will be liable for a full-time equivalent fee of more than £4,500. This means that this agreement does not apply to part-time students.

3. Analysis of access and retention and student success activities

In preparing the access agreement for 2012 the University analysed the data relating to key performance indicators over the previous six year period in respect of both access and retention and student success. This analysis informed 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.

The analysis in this agreement examines the data for the last available year in the context of that earlier work and assesses the University's recent performance.

3.1. 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 4th in the HE sector for young full-time entrants from low participation neighbourhoods and 12th of English universities for young full-time entrants from socio-economic classifications 4-7.

Over the years it has consistently exceeded its location adjusted benchmarks and exceeded the sector averages in **all** the following categories.

The University is now also exceeding its benchmark for the participation of students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowances.

Access Performance Indicator	Location Benchmark %	12/13 %
T1a Young Full Time degree entrants		
<i>From state schools</i>	96.5	98.8
<i>From socio-economic classifications 4 to 7</i>	43.0	46.9
<i>From POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	22.9	26.2
T1b Young Full Time undergraduate entrants		
<i>From state schools</i>	96.7	98.9
<i>From socio-economic classifications 4 to 7</i>	43.6	47.4
<i>From POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	23.6	27.0
T2a Mature Full Time undergraduate entrants		
<i>First degree entrants</i>		
<i>% of entrants who are mature</i>	n/a	31.5
<i>% of mature who are from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods and have no experience of HE</i>	19.7	18.8
<i>All undergraduate courses</i>		
<i>% of entrants who are mature</i>	n/a	32.5
<i>% of mature who are from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods and have no experience of HE</i>	18.6	18.4
T7 Participation of students in receipt of DSAs	7.0*	7.3

* not location adjusted

3.2. Retention and Student Success

T3a Non-Continuation Following Year of Entry

The University exceeds its benchmarks in all areas of non-continuation following year of entry and its performance continues to improve year-on-year.

T5 Projected Learning outcome

In the projected 'Degree' outcome the University had, in the past, dipped below its benchmark, but now 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 aim to recognise student achievement.

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

Retention and Student Success Performance Indicators	Benchmark %	11/12 %
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	92.2
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	8.8	6.4
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	n/a	1.4
<i>Mature entrants</i>		
<i>Continuing or qualifying</i>	n/a	91.3
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	10.8	7.9
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	n/a	0.8
<i>All entrants</i>		
<i>Continuing or qualifying</i>	n/a	91.9
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	9.4	6.9
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	n/a	1.2
T5 Projected Learning Outcomes		
<i>Full time first degree</i>		
<i>Degree</i>	74.4	78.4
<i>Other Award</i>	5.2	9.8
<i>Transfer to another HEI</i>	5.2	2.6
<i>Neither Award nor Transfer</i>	15.2	9.1

3.3. Conclusion

The University has invested significant resources in access and retention and student success 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 in retention and student success, when measured against externally set benchmarks.

4. Targets and Milestones

For the 2015 full-time access agreement the University will retain the targets and milestones which were initially identified in its 2012 agreement.

The latest available data shows that the University exceeded the targets it has set for 2017 in 2012/13. After reflection the University does not wish to change those targets. This is because it believes that they were, as required by OFFA, already stretching and that maintaining this performance in a turbulent higher education environment will be challenging.

4.1. Access Targets

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 Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)*

(In the case of T7, the University will aim to consolidate its excellent recent progress and remain above its benchmark through to 2017. However, this aspiration may be adversely affected by changes in the provision of DSAs and the University will need to review the use of this indicator as an appropriate measure for the participation of disabled people in HE. This it will do when there is greater clarity about government plans for DSAs.)

Access Performance Indicator targets	12/13 %	Target 2017 %
T1b Young full time undergraduate entrants		
<i>from socio-economic classifications 4-7</i>	47.4	45
<i>from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	27.0	30
T2a Mature full time undergraduate entrants		
<i>Entrants with no previous HE experience and from POLAR low participation neighbourhoods</i>	18.4	24
T7 Percentage of students in receipt of DSAs	7.3	6.5

4.2. Retention and student success targets

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

T3a *Non continuation following year of entry*

T5 *Projected Learning Outcomes*

Retention and student success indicators	11/12 %	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>	92.2	91.0
<i>Not found at any HE institution</i>	6.4	8.0
<i>Transfer to other HE institution</i>	1.4	1.0
T5 Projected Learning Outcomes		
<i>Full time degree entrants</i>		
<i>Degree</i>	78.4	80.0
<i>Other Award</i>	9.8	7.0
<i>Transfer to another HEI</i>	2.6	4.0
<i>Neither Award nor Transfer</i>	9.1	9.0

4.3 Milestones in years of agreement

The data available in any access agreement year will relate to an earlier cohort (the latest available for the relevant indicator at the time of writing the agreement) 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					
	Degree	74.5	75.0	76.0	78.0	80.0
	Other Award	10.6	10.3	9.6	8.3	7.0
	Transfer to another HEI	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Neither Award nor Transfer	10.9	10.7	10.4	9.7	9.0

5. Actions supported by this agreement

In developing these plans the University has had regard to detailed evidence about its student population, progression and attainment.

An analysis of the current student population indicates that 82% (81% in 2012/13) of Teesside students can be regarded as countable for OFFA purposes. Of the student full-time home undergraduate and liable for fees, 11.7% (10.2% in 2012/13) have declared a disability; 10.7% (9.6% in 2012/13) are from BME backgrounds; a further 22.5 (22% in 2012/13) are from POLAR 3 low participation neighbourhoods (quintile1); and a further 17.3% (17.9% in 2012/13) are from NSEC backgrounds 4 – 7. Of the remaining student population, 19.4% (21.3% in 2012/13) have household incomes below £42,611.

The very high level of participation by traditionally under-represented groups means that many measures are most effectively addressed at whole cohorts of students particularly given that one of the principal factors influencing student participation and success is the identification of the student with programme and institution.

Effective work to foster community, mutual respect and the value of diversity is also only possible on a universal basis.

For this reason there are two strands to the work that the University undertakes in connection with this agreement – a strand that seeks to address broad issues across the whole applicant and student population and a strand that seeks to develop particular interventions at tightly targeted groups where there are identifiable characteristics which influence participation, progression and attainment.

Strategic Priorities

In its work to support **access** the University's strategic priority will be to maintain the demographic and socio-economic profile of its student population and to raise aspirations among those groups under-represented in HE. It will:

- maintain, and seek to extend and enhance, its partnerships and collaborations with those organisations which send students to Teesside;
- provide positive, encouraging and demystifying information and individual guidance and advice to support effective choices by potential entrants; and
- encourage intellectual and social development in pre-HE learners.

In its work on ***retention and student success*** the University's strategic priorities will deliver a targeted focus on student experience, progression, and achievement. It will:

- support transition through the student life cycle;
- support the development of cohort identity and a sense of association with the University;
- build personal and academic confidence and competence; and
- support the development of supportive social networks and team working skills.

In its work on ***progression to further study or within employment*** the University's strategic priorities will be to develop:

- student acquisition of employability, enterprise and interpersonal skills; and
- provide real experience of work settings and the opportunity to reflect and learn from these experiences.

In all of this work, the University will consider ***equality and diversity*** by scrutinising the data available to it to identify differences in outcomes between different groups of students and prioritise work to equalise outcomes.

Activity strand		Indicative Activities
Improving Access	900,000	Close liaison with partnership and feeder organisations Targeted recruitment activity
Improving Retention and Student Success	995,000	Support for transition into HE Provision of information, advice and guidance Development of cohort cohesion Support for innovative and developmental practice
Progression to further study or to/within employment	1,352,000	Provision of skills development programmes Provision of volunteering, mentoring and work experience opportunities targeted at underrepresented groups
Targeted Support for specific groups	775,000	Replacement of DSAs Provision of individual advice and guidance Work in collaboration with external agencies
TOTAL	4,472,000	

6. Financial Support for Students

The University will also continue to provide additional generous financial support for students in the form of scholarships outside this agreement.

7. Implementation and Development

Consultation with students

In developing this agreement the University undertook consultation with students. This took the form of a presentation and discussion with student representatives at Student Experience Committee and a subsequent series of meetings with student representatives about options for supporting students. The University has also undertaken focus group work with potential applicants and has used the understandings gained from this to inform the development of its outreach work – particularly in relation to the explanation of the new funding system.

Equality and Diversity

The University has taken care to ensure that its commitments under this agreement and its duties and objectives under the Equality Act are aligned. The objectives developed for the Equality Action Plan overlap with the targets established in this agreement.

Operational Management

The strategic development and operational management of matters relating to this agreement will be the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor will be supported by a cross-university Steering Group which will include extensive membership from across the student body. This group will be an important component in the development of further agreements, the refinement and further development of an evaluation strategy and the monitoring of the University's performance against the agreements.

This group will be responsible for ensuring that the actions arising from this agreement are properly aligned with the University's strategies and other processes and structures within the University. This group will report into the University's management structure through the University's Corporate Executive Team and into the University's academic governance structure through the Learning and Student Experience Policy Committee.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Steering Group monitor actions under this agreement. In particular this will regularly:

- Receive data on progress towards the overall targets and relevant key performance indicators;
- Consider progress against the identified success measures;
- Monitor expenditure and activity;

- Commission new projects – particularly in the light of emergent data on the student profile;
- Ensure that successful practice is embedded across the university;
- Receive information on the formative evaluation of all aspects of this work and ensure that that evaluation informs further development;
- Identify clear objectives for all aspects of activities and monitor performance against them.

The group will also

- Ensure that appropriate committees and processes at School and Institutional level scrutinise their activities in the light of this agreement;
- Report progress annually to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive and to the University's Board of Governors;
- Co-ordinate the submission of information and monitoring reports for OFFA and Hefce

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.
- Delivery of bespoke web-based information for key influencers such as parent/carers and subject teachers, FAQs etc. Enhanced digital prospectus.
- Continued visibility of Key Information Sets on the University website 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, Local Authority teams/Social Workers).
- 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.

Access agreement 2015-16 resource plan (submission 1 st May 2014) (Table 7) Targets and milestones											
Institution name: Teesside University											
Institution UKPRN: 10007161											
Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body											
Number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	HESA T1b - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Young F/T undergraduate entrants from socio-economic classifications 4 - 7	No	2009/10	42.8	42	43.5	45			
2	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Young F/T undergraduate entrants POLAR low participation neighbouhoods	No	2009/10	28.8	29.4	29.6	30			
3	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	T2a Mature F/T undergratuade entrants with no previous HE experience and from POLAR low participation neighbouhoods	No	2009/10	23.6	23	23.5	24.5			
4	HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	T7 Percentage of students in receipt of DSA	No	2009/10	4.8	5.6	6	6.5			
6	HESA T5 - Projected degree (full-time, first degree entrants)	Degree	No	2008/09	74.2	76	78	80			
6	HESA T5 - Projected other award (full-time, first degree entrants)	Other Award	No	2008/09	11	9.6	8.3	7			
7	HESA T5 - Projected transfer (full-time, first degree entrants)	Transfer to another HEI	No	2008/09	3.8	4	4	4			
8	HESA T5 - Projected transfer (full-time, first degree entrants)	Neither Award nor Transfer	No	2008/09	11	10.4	9.7	9			
Notes											
Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around outreach and student success work (including collaborative work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access, student success and progression. These should be measurable outcomes -based targets and should focus on the number of beneficiaries reached by a particular activity/programme or the number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.											
Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.											
Number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1											
2											
3											
Optional commentary on milestones. This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.											
We have removed the target in row 5 as there is no relevant target type in the drop down list. The target referred to continuing or qualifying and is still a target in our Access Agreement but no loger features in this annex. Additionally we have removed the commentary in which we anticipated a dip in performance in the early years of the 2012/13 agreement as this is no longer applicable											