

## **BRUNEL UNIVERSITY ACCESS AGREEMENT - applying to new entrants commencing courses in 2015/16**

“Brunel University has built a long-standing reputation for providing high quality, research-led teaching to a very diverse student population. Our approach is to equip students with the skills and knowledge relevant to work and life, a feature which is perhaps unique in an institution of our kind. Our Access Agreement provides a comprehensive range of activities that support our students throughout their journey to University and beyond. In particular the University has invested in activities focussed on the progression of our students, working jointly with the Student Union and employers on activities such as the “Ready Programme”. Our focus in the coming years will be to deliver continuous improvement in the outcomes for our students through an evidence-based approach.”

Julia Buckingham, Vice Chancellor and Principal

“As President of the Student Union I support this agreement. As a Union we believe that every student matters and we are constantly striving to ensure Brunel students receive the best teaching and support possible. This agreement contains support for students throughout their time at Brunel and I look forward to working with the University to ensure the financial support and student success initiatives contained within it bring real benefits to the whole student community at Brunel.”

Martin Zaranyika, President Union of Brunel Students

### **Summary**

Brunel University wishes to set its fees above the basic fee and is therefore submitting an Access Agreement which sets out how it intends to utilise a percentage of the extra fee income generated to maintain access and to deliver positive outcomes for students from under-represented backgrounds at the University. It is our aim to maintain our OFFA expenditure at around 20% of additional fee income in any individual year.

We have consulted with the President of the Student Union in preparing this agreement and he has consulted the Unions’ executive with regard to its content. As members of Senate and Council the Student Union will continue to have strategic input to this agreement and will be represented on the University committees which work to deliver the agreement on a strategic and practical level.

Brunel University has a very diverse student population and therefore the focus of our OFFA Agreement will be to prioritise students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods, low socio-economic groups, students with a registered disability and care leavers and will not specifically focus on any particular ethnic minority.

Brunel University has a strong reputation for widening access both within the sector and with its partners in both mainstream education and further education. It also undertakes considerable activity to improve transition, retention and employability for its Widening Participation cohort and we believe that our efforts to widen access are amongst the strongest of any Pre-1992 research-intensive university.

The University has a diverse student population and has historically performed well against benchmarks for “under-represented” groups in Higher Education. We will seek to maintain our record of fair access and diverse admissions whilst focussing more closely on the outcomes for these students in regard to retention, academic achievement and progression.

As last year we will continue to increase our work in the areas of transition and student success to ensure our under-represented groups achieve outcomes comparable to our student population as a whole. This agreement sees an increase in the percentage of additional fee income spent on outreach and student success activities when compared to recent years in order to support this aim. We will maintain financial support programmes aimed at our target groups to ensure that they continue to view Higher Education as a viable choice and to maintain our vision of admission to Brunel being based on ability rather than ability to pay.

The University’s current interim Widening Participation Strategic Statement is available at: <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/about/administration/access-and-widening-participation>

Since its inception in 1966 Brunel University has also had a very strong focus on employability and employer engagement and this OFFA Agreement also contains details of schemes to ensure that under-represented groups can benefit from internships and placement years as well as activities to expose students to the world of work and to develop skills which we believe can improve outcomes for those students.

The University intends to set a fee of £9,000 for all Home & EU undergraduate students commencing full-time undergraduate studies in autumn 2014 and to subsequently review tuition fees annually in line with inflation. For students on four-year sandwich courses the fee for the sandwich year is £1,000. With regard to our BEng and BSc programmes with an integrated foundation year, we will charge a fee of £6,000 for the initial year. This agreement also gives a commitment to reduce the final year tuition fee for the four year masters programmes to the national basic fee. Full information on the university’s fee and scholarship levels will be published on the University’s website at <http://www.brunel.ac.uk>.

The University has around a dozen undergraduate courses in the Arts, Health and Social Care and Sport which recruit part-time. The fee for admission to a part-time undergraduate course will be based pro rata on the enhanced fee (£6,750 maximum part-time fee). The University will continue to pro-rate the standard fee for those students taking only part of

their programme of studies in order to redress academic failure or to make up time lost through illness.

Scholarships will not be available to those undergraduates whose fees are funded by other agencies (except ITT students) or where the full tuition fee is not charged. Students from the EU, Northern Ireland and Scotland are also ineligible for Scholarships.

The University's Access Agreement is structured to mirror our support for students throughout the whole lifecycle and is comprised of the following key sections:

- Outreach
- Transition
- Retention
- Progression
- Financial Support
- Current Performance
- Targets

### **Outreach Activities**

Brunel University has a strong reputation for widening access both within the sector and with its partners in both mainstream education and further education. The University has had a dedicated team since 2001 focussing on outreach, transition and retention and has achieved considerable success both directly with local Schools and Colleges in West London and through its award winning partnership programme with the London Borough of Hillingdon. Brunel is recognised by Buttle UK for its efforts to encourage the entry of care-leavers into the University and its efforts to provide specialist support for this group.

Brunel has a vibrant and attainment-raising outreach programme and each year around 4,000 visitors, from primary year six upwards, attend aspirational events delivered by Brunel. It is our aim to maintain this level of performance in attracting students from such groups through continuation of our Outreach activities, although we will need to work ever harder to do so with the lifting of the student number cap and an inherent increase in competition in the sector. Currently over 39% of the student intake comes from social classes' four to seven.

Detailed targets for our Outreach activity can be found within our University Widening Participation Strategic Assessment. Given changes to HEFCE funding it is anticipated that future outreach work will increasingly be funded from within the OFFA agreement.

Perhaps the most notable outreach activity is the highly regarded Urban Scholars programme. This programme focuses specifically on interventions with identified gifted and

talented students, in receipt of free school meals, from the London area and is part of a major research programme within our School of Sport and Education. The programme is based upon proven techniques in raising aspirations and channelling talent through improving critical thinking skills and is supported by an ever expanding body of evidence.

Brunel is the lead partner in the Heathrow Aviation UTC, in collaboration with the London Borough of Hillingdon and a number of industrial partners, which will provide a range of new and exciting pathways into engineering and other STEM subjects. The UTC will open in autumn 2014 and we will look to support the UTC with further targeted outreach activity.

Brunel University believes that a collaborative approach to outreach can bring a wider range of higher education opportunities to local students and as such we are founder members of AccessHE, a social enterprise developed within London's HE sector formed from within the former Aimhigher partnerships of the capital. We believe that this collaboration complements our existing, and highly successful, outreach programme.

AccessHE enables the development of new approaches and the sharing of best practice through specific forums. Brunel is already a participant in the LAC forum, Disability forum Student Ambassador forum, Evidence and Evaluation forum, Retention forum and Target Project forum. Membership of Access HE also provides valuable data to enable the targeting of activity to monitor progress on access issues across London in a holistic way.

Brunel WP staff have actively contributed to the delivery of pan-London student conferences, IAG events and attainment-raising initiatives, for example a two-day GCSE English enhancement programme in conjunction with Royal Holloway, University of London.

Joint activities on IAG and collaborations between Brunel and other providers such as the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, the Royal Veterinary College and St Georges, University of London further provide our local WP cohort with a broader perspective on HE.

We are also members of NEON (National Education Opportunities Network) which **is the professional organisation supporting those involved in widening access to higher education. NEON aims to enable those working to widen access to HE at all levels and in all sectors to affect change in their own organisations and communities.**

NEON is based on a cross-sector, bottom up approach bringing together HEIs, schools, colleges, student unions, the voluntary sector, professional bodies and statutory stakeholders. The focus is on both how the progression to HE for under-represented communities and individuals can be increased **and** also how their success when they enter, progress through, and leave, HE can be ensured.

## **Student Success Activities**

### **Transition**

Brunel has operated a programme called “Headstart” for a number of years which aims to give students with little or no experience of Higher Education a clear insight into the level of work expected at University and the study skills required. We will use our additional fee income to continually increase the numbers of students taking advantage of this pre-sessional scheme which is delivered partly on line and partly through on site workshops. It is our experience that transition support is critical in ensuring widening access students have a successful start at university and this contributes significantly to student success. We intend to extend transition activities to encompass transition not just to university but between Levels. We are also examining the impact of the mix of qualifications that students enter the University with in order to establish whether transition activities need to take this aspect into account. We will continue to support the transition of care leavers to Brunel as outlined in our Buttle UK Quality Mark commitment.

### **Retention**

It is likely that in future an increasing percentage of Access Agreement funds at Brunel will be directed towards student success activities including retention. Our data analysis has shown that certain groups, including mature students and care leavers are less likely to achieve the retention levels common to other cohorts. The reasons for non-completion are varied and can be both academic and due to external pressures. We will be funding academic skills staff to assist students throughout the student lifecycle and as part of a wider plan to develop a centre of educational excellence (BEEC) we will be examining our cohorts in detail to understand how we can intervene effectively to increase retention and boost outcomes where this is shown to be necessary. We will also be utilising this funding stream to develop an alternative to the current Access To Learning Fund which can be critical in aiding retention of disadvantaged groups including mature students, students requiring DSA and care leavers.

This Agreement details our performance and targets for retention of students for the future.

### **Progression**

2013/14 has seen extra-curricular pilot activity with Level One students to develop soft skills identified through research with partner employers. Two cohorts have undertaken the “Ready Programme” which focuses on building cross-disciplinary student teams to develop and disseminate projects enabling the participants to acquire a range of skills and to be exposed to real-world business issues. Student feedback is being assessed; however initial responses are positive and it is likely that such activity will be developed progressively University-wide at all levels. This activity will be funded from our Access Agreement and will be driven forward by a newly formed School of Professional Development.

Our analysis suggests that student success is improved where students take an industrial or other work related placement. As an institution Brunel University strongly believes in a student experience built upon the foundations of employer engagement and research-led teaching and has continued to provide placement options across its portfolio. However our research continues to show that students from Low Participation Neighbourhoods and mature students are less likely to take up this option. In order to improve take up of placements by under-represented groups we will provide a fee-waiver to students from such groups during the placement year. Where placements are unpaid, we will provide £1k to each student where applicable to ensure take up of this opportunity. We also intend to provide bursaries to ensure students or recent graduates from under-represented groups are able to take up internships and therefore assist with entry into low mobility professions.

Access Agreement funding will continue to support the development of professional mentoring programmes linked to internships for students from under-represented groups and internal “buddying” and peer mentoring schemes to aid transition, retention and progression.

## **Financial Support**

### **Access scholarships**

Brunel will continue to offer scholarships to students from under-represented groups who choose Brunel as their 1<sup>st</sup> choice of institution (i.e. have unconditional firm status with Brunel University) and meet the published terms and conditions, including income, receipt of DSA, being a care leaver amongst a number of specific criteria.

### **Local Borough Scholarships**

We intend to continue our **Local Borough Scholarships** which will be worth **£6,000 annually, subject to satisfactory progression**, paid as £5k in fee waiver and £1k in cash or kind. They will be provided to 30 Undergraduate students in 2015, on the basis of academic excellence and require high levels of academic achievement.

Eligible students must have attended a maintained school or college (not an independent or private school) in one of the six London boroughs with whom the University operates Widening Participation partnerships – **Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow.**

Students must also meet one or more of the following under-represented criteria:

- have a **disability**, including dyslexia
- are a **care-leaver**

- come from a **low-income or low socio-economic background** (i.e. are entitled to a full Government Maintenance Grant or Special Support grant).

### **Care Leaver (Foyer Federation) Bursary**

A £1000 cash payment will be made to every care leaver registered on a Brunel undergraduate programme in each year of their study, subject to eligibility criteria, up to a maximum of three years. Those students on a sandwich programme will be entitled to a Placement Scholarship to cover the fee for their placement year. This bursary is in addition to any other financial entitlements.

### **PGCE Access Scholarships**

We anticipate providing around 10% of our PGCE students with a one year scholarship. Consisting of a £2,500 fee waiver, these scholarships will be available to students from under-represented groups.

### **Scholarships and awards additional to those funded through our OFFA Agreement**

The University has a range of existing annual scholarships currently available to new full-time undergraduates at Brunel which are not included in our OFFA arrangements. With the exception of care leavers, applicants cannot receive more than one Scholarship. The University has been successful in obtaining support from The London Borough of Hillingdon, TATA Global Beverages, Ford and Nexen to provide additional scholarship opportunities for our students.

For full details of Scholarships available from Brunel University see:

<http://www.brunel.ac.uk/ugfunding>

### **Current Performance**

The University's first time Undergraduate cohort for 2012/13 is expressed in the following tables.

With regards to performance against HESA benchmarks Brunel performs well in exceeding the location adjusted benchmark for first degree entrants from Social Classes 4-7. The number of Students entering Brunel who are eligible for DSA continues to grow, exceeding our expected benchmarks by a considerable margin, no doubt a function of our award winning Disability and Dyslexia service. We are close to reaching the location adjusted benchmark for students from low participation neighbourhoods. In common with much of the sector the impact of the national decline in Part Time and Mature students has meant that efforts to increase this cohort have not been successful although performance against location adjusted benchmark has not changed in 2012/13.

Young Full Time first degree entrants								
HESA Table T1a	From Social Classes 4-7				From low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3)			
Year	Brunel %	Benchmark	Location adjusted Benchmark	UK Average	Brunel %	Benchmark	Location adjusted Benchmark	UK Average
2012/13	39.4	34.2	35.1	32.3	5.0	11.1	5.4	10.9
2011/12	31.9	32.3	32.9	30.7	5.2	10.6	5.6	10.2
2010/11	37.1	33.1	33.9	30.6	5.0	10.3	5.0	10.0
2009/10	36.4	32.1	32.1	30.0	4.0	10.2	4.8	9.6

Data Source: HESA Performance Indicators

MATURE - Full Time All undergraduate entrants				
HESA Table T2a	From low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3)			
Year	Brunel %	Benchmark	Location adjusted Benchmark	UK Average
2012/13	4.7	13.8	6.8	11.7
2011/12	4.4	13.3	5.7	11.0
2010/11	4.2	12.9	5.6	11.3
2009/10	3.6	13.9	5.4	11.0

Data Source: HESA Performance Indicators

ALL STUDENTS - Full Time Undergraduates			
HESA Table T7	In Receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (POLAR3)		
Year	% with DSA	Benchmark	UK Average
2012/13	9.2	6.2	6.5
2011/12	8.0	5.7	5.9
2010/11	7.0	5.2	5.3
2009/10	5.4	4.7	4.9

Data Source: HESA Performance Indicators

## Targets

The University's aim is to sustain its performance as measured by the percentages from the various groups identified in relevant HESA Performance Indicators whilst delivering improvements over time in measures related to Low Participation Neighbourhoods.

The table below sets out our target and milestones relating to performance against benchmarks from 2014 /15 onwards. Note that Brunel does not have a portfolio which attracts a significant part time cohort (around 10 fte) and we have therefore not set targets for part time students although they will be eligible for our scholarship packages.



Number	Measure	2017-18 Target	Progress to date, by academic year			
			2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
1	NS-SEC classes 4-7 (HESA T1a - Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	36.4	36.4	37.1	31.9	39.4
2	Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2) (HESA T1a - Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	6.7*	6.0	6.0	7.0	7.3
3	Mature Entrants (HESA T2a - full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	4.5	3.6	4.2	4.4	4.7
4	Students in receipt of DSA (HESA T7 - full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	5.8	5.4	7.0	8.0	9.2
5	No longer in HE after 1 year (HESA T3a - Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	11.7	15.7	17.4	13.4	11.9
6	Postgraduate ITT: Disabled - Disability profiles of intake - first year trainees Primary & Secondary - NCTL	6.2	6.1	10.2	10.7	-
7	Postgraduate ITT: Mature - Age profiles of intake (Age 25+) - first year trainees Primary & Secondary - NCTL	55.0	54.3	54.1	53.6	-
8	No longer in HE after 1 year & in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (HESA T3b - Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	7.0	11.6	9.8	8.1	7.8
9	Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (HESA T1a - Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	5.0	4.0	5.0	5.2	5.0

**Data Source:** Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9 are sourced from HESA Performance Indicators and are released in March of each year. Numbers 6 and 7 are sourced from the National College for Teaching & Leadership (NCTL) performance profile reports, released in August/September of each year.

\* Target for 2013-14

## Institutional Monitoring Arrangements

This access agreement is developed by a working group drawn from across the institution including student union representation and is overseen by the Fees, scholarships and SASS Committee. The latter committee is responsible for tracking institutional performance against the agreement. Strategically, the agreement is directed by the Education Strategy Committee on behalf of the University's Executive Board. The Education Strategy Committee is responsible for the development, monitoring and institutional response to the data which underpins this strategy.

An institution-wide monitoring and evaluation strategy covering the Brunel Access Agreement and HEFCE Widening Access allocations will be introduced in September 2014.

Periodically, specific institutional research projects are carried out to understand the needs and issues of specific under-represented groups studying at Brunel and these studies also influence University policy and the direction of our access strategy.

## Publication of details of fees and financial support available

As previously summary information detailing the Scholarships and benefits package and eligibility criteria will be made available in print form, and via the web, prior to the University's June Open Day for 2015 entry. Detailed information regarding the timing, processes and procedures necessary to receive or apply for a scholarship will be available prior to our September Open Day for 2015 entry and will be made available to prospective students and HE advisors within Schools and Colleges in both print and electronic form.

### **Meeting our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and setting our Equality Objectives 2012-2016**

The publication of the Equality data on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 met part of the University's statutory requirements under the Equality Act 2010. In publishing its Equality Objectives on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2012, the University met the remaining requirements.

The Equality Objectives are set out the University's Equality Plan in which the University is accountable to staff, students and other service users. It also gives the public the information needed to hold the University to account as far as our performance on equality is concerned. The publication of the Objectives is part of the University's Specific Duty under the Equality Act 2010. The Specific Duty requires the University to:

- set and publish equality objectives no later than the required date and review these objectives annually

Public bodies subject to Specific Duties must publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, and all published information must show that the University has due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The three aims of the Equality Duty are intended to support good decision-making by ensuring that the University considers how different people are affected by its activities. They also help us to deliver policies and services which are efficient, effective and accessible to all, and which meet different people's needs.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race, including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality

- religion or belief, including lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The Equality Strategy Group formed part of the consultation process in the formulation of the Equality Objectives.

Access agreement 2015-16 resource plan (submission 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2014) (Table 7) Targets and milestones											
Institution name: Brunel University											
Institution UKPRN: 10000961											
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 T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: young full-time first degree entrants 2009/10	No	2009/0	36.4	36.4	36.4	36.4	36.4		Brunel has an excellent record in attracting this cohort. Competition for these students in the market means we will have to work hard to maintain current performance.
2	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	HESA Tables T2a: Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: mature full-time undergraduate entrants 2011/12 (based on POLAR3 method)	No	2010/11	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5		Brunel has seen its share of mature students fall and this target to maintain our percentage of mature students will require continued commitment to targeting this group.
3	HESA T7 - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, all undergraduate entrants)	HESA Table T7 - Participation of students in higher education who are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA): Full-time all undergraduates 2009/10	No	2009/0	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.8		We wish to continue our success in attracting growing numbers of disabled students and have developed a dedicated service to meet their needs.
4	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	Table T3a - Non-continuation following year of entry: full-time first degree entrants 2008/09	No	2009/0	17.4	13.1	12.4	11.7	11.7		A programme of retention projects is being funded within our academic schools to improve retention of key groups.
5	Other statistic - Postgraduate (please give details in the next column)	Postgraduate ITT: Disabled - Disability profiles of intake - first year trainees Primary & Secondary - NCTL	No	2009/0	6.1	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2		We wish to continue our success in attracting growing numbers of disabled students and have developed a dedicated service to meet their needs.
6	Other statistic - Postgraduate (please give details in the next column)	Postgraduate ITT: Mature - Age profiles of intake (Age 25+) - first year trainees Primary & Secondary - NCTL	No	2009/0	54	55	55	55	55		Brunel has a healthy number of Mature (25+) students in ITT courses above sector average of 51% and this target represents a wish to maintain it.
7	HESA T3b - No longer in HE after 1 year & in low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA Tables T3b -Non-continuation following year of entry: young full-time first degree entrants 2009/10 (Young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (based on POLAR3 method)(#4)	No	2009/0	9.8	8	7.7	7.3	7		Brunel plans to improve retention.
8	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: young full-time first degree entrants 2009/10 (based on POLAR3 method)	No	2009/0	4	4.5	4.7	4.8	5		Many of this cohort enter on integrated foundation courses and Brunel will need to provide an attractive package to increase numbers in the light of cheaper provision in FE colleges.

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.