Widening Participation: the Access Agreement and Implications for Academic Schools

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Outline

1. Widening Participation: context and challenges
2. Where are we now and where do we need to be?
3. The 2012 Access Agreement
   - Overview
   - Funding
4. Implications for faculties and schools
5. Responsibilities and risks
6. Questions / Discussion
A new funding landscape

Basic fee of £6,000; Maximum £9,000

Universities charging over £6,000 must have an Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) setting out targets for the recruitment of students from low income backgrounds and under-represented groups (i.e. Widening Participation students)

This requires us to commit approximately 33% of our fee income above £6,000 to access measures linked to stretching diversity targets.

Policy conflict between WP and Core and Margin numbers controls (AAB+)
## Current WP position

(HESA Performance Indicators and UCAS data, 2010 entry)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Schools and Colleges:</td>
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<tr>
<td>HESA BENCHMARK</td>
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<tr>
<td>80.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower socio-economic group (NS SEC 4-7) Young Entrants</td>
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<tr>
<td>HESA BENCHMARK</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs) Young Entrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HESA BENCHMARK</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.0%</td>
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Why is WP so difficult?

- We are a national recruiter: Only 21% of our young entrants are from the NE
- We are popular with independent schools- and some of our subjects rely on them
- Our WP activity and impact to date have been regional
- Culture change takes generations.
- Universities can’t fix social mobility in isolation
- The single most powerful influence on HE participation is attainment at 16
- Challenge potentially exacerbated by higher fees and AAB+ issues
Recognised as a national leader
Your practice is inspiring and I wish I was one of your feeder schools!!’ (Participant at SSAT conference March 09)

Thank you very much for a wonderful visit. Your professionalism, organisation and enthusiasm meant that our students had a fantastic insight into what the future could hold for them

I’d never really thought about university at all till last year...PARTNERS ...was the reason I thought I’d apply

Cited as good practice in 2 UUK reports, 2 HEFCE reports and OFFA’s report on widening access to highly-selective universities

Realising Opportunities identified as “excellent practice” in June 2011 White Paper

Realising Opportunities awarded Times Higher “WP Initiative of the Year” in November 2011

‘I wish we were Newcastle...’ (comment from a PVC of a university participating in Realising Opportunities)

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Aberdeen, Southampton, Durham, York, Cardiff, Manchester, University of Western Australia and Monash University have all developed schemes based on best practice from PARTNERS
The 2012 Access Agreement – Building on activity with proven impact

1. Expand PARTNERS
2. Expand the Graduate Ambassador Scheme: more ambassadors, more regions, more target schools
3. Collaboration with HE (develop national and regional partnerships)
4. Targeted financial support
5. More targeted marketing
Target regions

100% of State Schools & Colleges
- Cumbria
- Northumberland
- Tyne & Wear
- County Durham
- Tees Valley
- North Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire

Identified Target Schools & Colleges
- Lancashire
- Humberside
- Greater Merseyside
- Greater Manchester
- Cheshire & Wirral
- South Yorkshire
- Derbyshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Lincolnshire & Rutland
- Staffordshire
- Shropshire
- The Black Country
- Leicestershire
- Birmingham & Solihull
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire
- Coventry and Warwickshire
- Northamptonshire
- London North
- London East
- London West
- London Central
- London South
WP: Where are we aiming to get to?
“Firm commitments and stretching targets”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HESA BENCHMARK</th>
<th>BASELINE (2010)</th>
<th>2012-13 TARGET</th>
<th>2016-17 TARGET</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Schools and Colleges</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>84.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower socio-economic group (NS SEC 4-7) Young Entrants</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>23.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPNs) Young Entrants</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>12.19%</td>
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Delivery implications:

• Geographical expansion of pre-entry outreach and awareness-raising (Graduate Ambassadors, PARTNERS, WP outreach etc) will be delivered through Marketing and Communications Directorate.

• Student financial support /retention activity will grow as larger numbers of students flow through (impact on Careers Service; Student Wellbeing; Financial Support Team etc).

• Key priority for Faculties / Schools for 2012-13 is to do everything possible to achieve WP targets for admissions.

• Expansion of activities will affect Faculties / Schools from 2013-14 and will need to be factored into budgets and workload allocation planning. The main impact will be increased numbers of students attending PARTNERS and Year 12 Summer Schools etc.
Access funding commitments as a proportion of the £9,000 fee income

- Commitment of £7,129,835 in 2012-13
- Increasing to £12,578,102 by 2016-17
- Most of expenditure (£30 million over 5 years) is on financial support for students:
  - Promise Scholarships
  - Access Scholarships
  - National Scholarships
- Significant growth in activity delivered by Marketing and Communications Directorate from 2012-13
- Faculty / School delivery will grow from 2013-14
Responsibilities and risks

• Delivery of the Access Agreement is not an optional activity. Our financial viability, and people’s jobs, depend on it.

• Failure to meet WP admissions targets will compromise our progress towards WP benchmarks, and may result in withdrawal of our Access Agreement approval and permission to charge fees above £6,000.

• All Schools have WP targets for 2012 entry. These will increase in future years in line with Access Agreement targets. We may need to review our core quota allocation across subjects to take account of this.

• Delivery of the (current and expanded) activity needs to be built into our normal planning and budgeting processes.

• To support this, Faculties / Schools will need to earmark resources within the ‘RAM allocation’ and plan to enable colleagues to deliver activity.
Questions?