

This Access Agreement between Newcastle University and the Office For Fair Access (OFFA) covers the period from 1 September 2009 until 31 August 2010 (academic year 2009-2010). It relates to Home UK undergraduate and PGCE students entering the University from September 2009. Ongoing arrangements for students who entered the University in 2006, 2007 and 2008 are described in the University's separate Access Agreements for the relevant years of entry.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Newcastle University is committed to widening participation and fair access. We wish to encourage able, highly-motivated and enthusiastic students of all ages, and from all backgrounds and contexts, to apply to our degree programmes.
- 1.2 Our students typically come from all parts of the UK, and more than 75% are from outside the North East. As a civic university which engages fully with our community, the city and the region, our Widening Participation Strategy includes extensive work with schools and colleges in target areas to promote progression, participation and flexible access. We also seek to attract and retain talented students from all parts of the UK, and our Access Agreement and bursary commitments reflect these aims.
- 1.3 Our admissions policies and practices are based on principles of integrity and fairness, and involve the assessment of each applicant's ability, achievements and potential.
- 1.4 We wish to admit the brightest and best students, regardless of background. We recognise that some of those students may have concerns about the financial costs of Higher Education. The bursary scheme described in this Access Agreement, available for students commencing undergraduate or PGCE programmes in 2009, will provide additional financial support for many of our students.
- 1.5 We also know that many talented and able people do not feel confident about applying to university. This may be because they have no family experience of higher education, or because they lack confidence about their ability to achieve the necessary entry requirements for a university like Newcastle. We are committed to investing in additional outreach work with schools and colleges in order to encourage more people to achieve their potential and enjoy the life-long benefits of higher education.
- 1.6 For those who choose to study at Newcastle University, we are confident that we offer challenging, exciting and relevant degree programmes, taught by experts whose research enriches the learning environment for all of our students. The overall 'Newcastle experience' is underpinned by our strong commitment to the provision of outstanding opportunities for our students to add value to their academic studies by gaining additional skills and experience which will prepare them for rewarding careers. Our strengths in enterprise education and vocationally-relevant programmes are reflected in our exceptional record of graduate employability.
- 1.7 These commitments and principles set the context for this Access Agreement, details of which are shown in the sections which follow.

2. Fee Limits

- 2.1 Newcastle University will charge an annual (home rate) tuition fee of **£3,225** for all of its eligible full-time undergraduate degree programmes and for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme in the academic year 2009-10.
- 2.2 Undergraduate programmes (or parts of programmes) funded under contract by the Department of Health will not be subject to the variable fee of £3,225 (At Newcastle University, this currently includes the following programmes: Speech and Language Sciences; the fifth year of the 5 year programmes in Medicine and Dentistry; years two, three and four of the four-year accelerated Medicine degree for graduates).
- 2.3 Students on four-year programmes who are undertaking a one-year placement, or a year abroad, as a compulsory part of their degree programme, will be liable to pay the relevant proportion of the annual tuition fee (25% of the full fee, i.e. £806.25 in 2009-10).
- 2.4 Subject to regulations published by the government each year, the annual home rate of tuition fee charged by the University is expected to increase to reflect inflation. The fee is reviewed annually, in the light of guidance from the DIUS, and the amount payable in any given year will be published in advance by the University in the relevant publicity materials, including the University website.

- 2.5 The University's bursaries and other financial support offered to eligible students are reviewed each year.
- 2.6 Students who are offered a place at the University will be informed of the total fees payable for the duration of their programme of study (based on estimates of the likely fee amounts to be confirmed by the DIUS each year).

3. Widening participation context and target groups

- 3.1 This Access Agreement is part of the University's overall strategies to widen and increase participation by groups of students currently under-represented at the University. Widening participation is an important element of the University's Corporate Plan and strategic objectives.
- 3.2 The University's performance in widening participation, as measured by its intake each year of students from key groups under-represented in higher education, is published publicly in the annual HESA Performance Indicators.
- 3.3 The activities and investment described in this Agreement represent just a small part of the University's overall work to widen and increase progression to higher education. The University has undertaken an intensive programme of widening participation activity, working with schools and colleges in the North East over the past 15 years (see Section 7, below, and Annex 1). This work will be sustained and developed during the period of this Agreement, subject to the continued availability of funding.
- 3.4 For the purposes of this Access Agreement, the University's *additional* outreach work and financial investment to maintain and safeguard fair access are aimed particularly at the following groups:
- Students from lower socio-economic groups
 - Students from low participation neighbourhoods
 - Students from black and minority ethnic groups
 - Students with a disability
 - Students who are from lower income backgrounds
 - Looked After Children/ those from a care background
 - Students with a range of relevant other personal or educational disadvantage factors, including those who enter the University through the PARTNERS Programme supported entry route.
- 3.5 The **additional measures** described in Sections 4, 5, 6 and 8 specifically aim to:
- Increase the number and proportion of applicants with appropriate qualifications, ability and potential, from: lower socio-economic groups; low participation neighbourhoods; black and minority ethnic groups; Looked After Children and those with other relevant personal or educational disadvantage factors
 - At least maintain the application and progression rates to the University of students with a disability
 - Encourage more students from lower-income backgrounds to feel confident that they will receive adequate levels of financial support if they choose to study at Newcastle University
 - Contribute to an overall increase in regional rates of progression to higher education
 - Increase progression to Newcastle University of students from lower income backgrounds from all parts of the UK.
 - Encourage the highest-achieving students from lower income backgrounds to consider studying at Newcastle University
 - Support students from lower income backgrounds who make a particular contribution to University life in a range of areas
 - Encourage students from lower income backgrounds to participate in exchange programmes.
- 3.6 Milestones relating to these aims (where relevant) are shown in Section 11 below.

4. Bursary Scheme for 2009 entry

- 4.1 The University is committed to providing financial assistance to students from lower income backgrounds. Students entering the University in 2009, who are ordinarily resident in the UK and to whom the home rate of tuition fee applies (subsequently referred to as 'home UK students') will be eligible for bursary support according to the criteria below

4.2 Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursaries

Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursaries are automatically provided to all home UK undergraduate entrants who meet the relevant criteria:

- All home UK undergraduate students commencing study in 2009, whose household income, as assessed and notified to the University by the Student Loans Company, is £25,000 or less, will automatically receive a Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursary of £1,280 for each relevant year¹ of undergraduate study.
- All home UK undergraduate students commencing study in 2009, whose household income (as assessed and notified to the University by the Student Loans Company) is between £25,001 and £32,284 will automatically receive a Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursary of £640 for each relevant year of undergraduate study.

4.3 Newcastle University Achievement Bursaries

In addition to the Undergraduate Bursaries described above, which are provided to **all** home UK undergraduates who meet the relevant household income criteria, and provide the relevant information, the University also offers Achievement Bursaries to students whose financial circumstances and grades on entry meet the relevant criteria:

- All home UK undergraduate students commencing study in 2009, who are eligible for an Undergraduate Bursary on financial grounds, **AND** who achieve, on entry, at least **three grade A passes at A level** (or equivalent other qualifications²) will receive an additional Achievement Bursary of £500 per annum for each relevant year of undergraduate study.
- All home UK undergraduate students commencing study in 2009, who are eligible for an Undergraduate Bursary on financial grounds, **AND** who achieve, on entry, **two grade A passes at A level** (or equivalent other qualifications) will receive an additional Achievement Bursary of £200 per annum for each relevant year of undergraduate study.

4.4 PARTNERS Achievement Bursaries

Up to two PARTNERS Achievement Bursaries of £1,000, available in the first year of study only, will be awarded in each Academic School to the student(s) considered to have performed best overall on entry through the PARTNERS supported entry route. To be eligible for consideration for a PARTNERS Achievement Bursaries, applicants must:

- Be eligible for a full or partial Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursary on financial grounds
- Make the Newcastle University degree programme their Firm (CF or UF) choice through UCAS
- Attend the PARTNERS Assessed Summer School and complete all of the necessary assignments
- Meet ALL of the conditions of their offer of a place: i.e. achieve the specified grades **AND** successfully pass the Assessed Summer School assessment

A PARTNERS Achievement Bursary may be held in addition to an Achievement Bursary awarded under section 4.3, above.

4.5 PGCE Bursaries

All home UK students following a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) programme in 2009-10, and who are eligible for the full means-tested element of the Government Higher Education Maintenance Grant, will receive a Newcastle University PGCE Bursary of £320.

4.6 ncl+ Bursaries

For students entering from 2009, the University makes available £40,000 each year for bursaries to recognise individual undergraduate students who make an exceptional contribution to the life of the University through sport, music, enterprise, community activity or other relevant contributions. These bursaries (which may be £500 or £1000) are available only to students who have received an Undergraduate or PGCE Bursary on financial grounds. They may be awarded in any year of study, and are normally awarded for one year only. To receive a ncl+ Bursary, students must be personally recommended by a relevant member of University staff. ncl+ Bursaries may be held in addition to any Bursaries awarded under the terms of sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 or 4.7 of this Access Agreement.

4.7 Exchange Bursaries

For students entering from 2009, the University sets aside £20,000 per year to provide additional bursary support of up to £800 to students participating in ERASMUS or non-EU exchange programmes. These bursaries are available only to students who receive an Undergraduate Bursary on financial grounds.

¹ Details of the Newcastle University Bursary Scheme are published each year in the **Guide to Student Finance** for the relevant year of entry (obtainable from the University). Full details of bursary regulations, including those which apply to students undertaking repeat years or part-time study, are available on the University website.

² Details of grades needed in 'equivalent qualifications', to qualify for an Achievement Bursary, are published on the Newcastle University website.

Exchange Bursaries may be held in addition to any other Bursaries awarded under the terms of sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 or 4.6 of this Access Agreement.

- 4.8 Eligible students who are undertaking a compulsory placement / study abroad as part of their degree programme, and by whom a reduced rate tuition fee would normally be payable to the University, will receive a bursary reflecting the reduced rate of fee, on a *pro rata* basis.
- 4.9 All bursaries will be paid as a cash award.
- 4.10 The amount of the annual bursary in each category described above will be reviewed by the University each year.
- 4.11 For students from England³ **commencing undergraduate degree programmes in 2009**, the table below shows examples of the amount of non-repayable support for which students may be eligible each year. In addition, students will be able to take out repayable student loans for living costs and fee deferral.

Annual household income	Government financial support per year	Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursary per year	Newcastle University Achievement Bursary	Total amount of non-repayable financial support per year
£25,000 or less	Full maintenance grant of £2,906	£1,280	£500 for grades AAA or equivalent £200 for grades AA or equivalent	Minimum: £4,186 Maximum: £4,686 depending on grades on entry.
Between £25,001 and £32,284	Partial maintenance grant between £1450(approx) and £2,906	£640	£500 for grades AAA or equivalent £200 for grades AA or equivalent	Minimum: £2,090 Maximum: £4,046 depending on grades on entry and household income
Between £32,285 and £50,020	Partial maintenance grant between £50 and £1450 (approx)	£0	£0	Minimum: £50 Maximum: £1,450 depending on household income

5. Bursary schemes for continuing students

- 5.1 Home UK Undergraduate students who commenced study in 2006, 2007 or 2008 will be eligible for a Newcastle University Bursary under the terms of the Access Agreement relevant to their year of entry.
- 5.2 Revised Bursary amounts and income thresholds in 2009-10 for continuing students who entered in 2006, 2007 or 2008 are summarised here:

2007 and 2008 entry		2006 entry only	
Annual household income	Newcastle University Bursary per year	Annual household income	Newcastle University Bursary per year
£18,360 or less	£1,280	£18,360 or less	£1,365
Between £18,361 and £26,222	£960	Between £18,361 and £39,333	£1,050
Between £26,223 and £32,284	£640		

- 5.3 Full details of these bursary schemes, and of scholarships and prizes available, are included in the relevant Access Agreement.

6. Bursary assessment and payment

- 6.1 Students' eligibility for government financial support will be assessed on the basis of financial information provided to Student Finance England (or equivalent bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

³ Details of government student support arrangements for students from other parts of the UK are available from the relevant government websites for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- 6.2 Students do not have to apply separately for consideration for a Newcastle University Bursary. To be considered for a Bursary, students and their sponsors must indicate to Student Finance England (or equivalent body) that they give permission for their financial information to be used for bursary assessment purposes.
- 6.3 Newcastle University Bursaries will be paid to students by Student Finance Direct
- 6.4 The Bursary will normally be paid in a single payment in February each year. Details of procedures for payment of the bursary will be provided to all students holding an offer of a place.
- 6.5 From the information which we have about our current students, we estimate that the numbers of 2009-entry students eligible for bursaries in 2009-10 will be:

Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursaries of £1280	875	23.5% of total UK 2009 entrants
Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursaries of £640	242	6.5% of total UK 2009 entrants
Additional Achievement Bursaries of £500 or £200, based on grades on entry	471	42% of eligible Undergraduate Bursary recipients (and 12.7% of all UK entrants)
PARTNERS Achievement Bursaries	54	22% of all entrants through PARTNERS supported entry route
PGCE Bursaries of £320	50	20% of PGCE entrants

- 6.6 The majority of funding for Bursaries derives from student fee income paid by all Undergraduate/ PGCE students. Alumni funding (estimated to be approximately £250,000 per annum) contributes to the overall resources for the Newcastle University Bursary scheme, subject to continued availability of donations for this purpose.
- 6.7 The Newcastle University Bursary scheme will be reviewed annually and may be revised to reflect changing circumstances and requirements and / or government support arrangements.

7 Recognising outstanding achievement

- 7.1 In addition to the Newcastle University Bursary scheme described above, the University offers a **Newcastle Excellence Scholarship Scheme** to support its aim to admit undergraduate students of excellent ability and potential and to recognise outstanding achievement on entry.
- 7.2 Excellence Scholarships of up to £1,500 (normally in the first year of study only) for students from the UK and EU are available in all science, agriculture and engineering disciplines and in some humanities, arts and social science programmes. Specific criteria for each award differ according to subject, but are mainly based on attainment on entry. Full details are available in our *Guide to Student Finance* and on the University website.
- 7.3 Excellence Scholarships of up to £1,000 are available to support intercalated study in medicine and dentistry and the fourth year of the integrated Master's (MSci) in Biomedical Sciences.
- 7.4 It is expected that students from the target groups in this Access Agreement will benefit from these Excellence Scholarships on a proportionate basis each year.
- 7.5 For students entering the University in 2009, it is anticipated that approximately 200 awards will be made to new first year students. The University's overall investment in Excellence Scholarships and awards for the 2009 entry cohort amounts to approximately £190,000, of which approximately £57,000 is expected to be awarded to students from the target cohorts identified in this Access Agreement
- 7.6 Information about the Newcastle Excellence Scholarships Scheme and a range of other scholarships and prizes and awards in individual subject areas is provided on the University website and in printed publicity materials.

8. Provision of information to students

- 8.1 A key to the success of our initiatives to promote and safeguard fair access is the provision of clear, timely and accurate information about student finance to potential students, parents, teachers and advisers.
- 8.2 Our Undergraduate Prospectus contains information about student finance and an outline of our bursary scheme.
- 8.3 Our comprehensive **Guide to Student Finance** includes information about fees, government financial support, the Newcastle University Bursary Scheme, the Newcastle Excellence Scholarships Scheme, Access to Learning Funds, student loans and other ways of funding study. It also provides advice on

budgeting and financial management. A copy of the Guide is sent with the Undergraduate Prospectus to all enquirers and to all UK schools and colleges. Copies are available at all HE recruitment fairs, parents' evenings, school visits, University Visit Days, post-application open days and other relevant events. The Guide is revised annually (more frequently if necessary) to reflect any changes in our Bursary scheme and in government student support arrangements.

- 8.4 Our University website includes up-to-date financial information, including a PDF version of the *Guide to Student Finance*.
- 8.5 All applicants who receive an offer of a place receive further information which explains the full range of bursaries, scholarships and other awards which are available in their subject area.
- 8.6 The website is being further developed to include resources for those who advise students, including a PowerPoint presentation with notes, which can be downloaded for use by teachers and careers advisers, handouts and budget planner activities for potential students.
- 8.7 Our student recruitment and widening participation teams visit schools and colleges to give presentations to teachers and pupils about student finance matters. In addition, our trained Graduate Ambassadors visit schools and colleges to explain student finance issues and our bursary scheme, and give first-hand, credible information about the experience of being a student at Newcastle University. The Graduate Ambassador scheme was developed and piloted during 2005-06.
- 8.8 The University also contributes to Student Finance seminars provided by the region's Aimhigher Area Partnerships, which also convey the key messages through relevant websites. In addition, the University works to reinforce the messages about student financial support alongside the government's national publicity scheme.
- 8.9 Existing eligible students (from 2006 entry onwards) are reminded about the bursary scheme and financial support available during each year of study at the University. This ranges from information provided at the pre-arrival and registration phase, to email, web and face-to-face publicity campaigns throughout the year.

9. Current outreach activities

- 9.1 Newcastle University has a coherent and wide-ranging programme of existing widening participation work, which is reviewed and revised annually (see Annex 1 for details). The outreach elements of our Widening Participation Strategy are based on the following key themes:
 - Working with young people (from primary school age) to raise their aspirations and awareness of higher education, using our current students as positive role models through our Students into Schools Project, Student Representative Scheme, 'Student Guide to Student Life' and residential Summer Schools
 - Encouraging positive aspirations and attitudes in families and communities through work with parents, younger children, looked after children and disaffected groups
 - Activities and initiatives to help to raise the attainment of young people, including Master Classes, taster events and Summer Schools
 - Building strong relationships with schools and colleges, and working closely with teachers, advisers, Connexions staff and others who influence student choice and aspirations
 - Providing opportunities for all potential applicants to find out about the University, together with information which will help them to make an informed choice about their options, through a wide-ranging programme of liaison activities, school / college visits, comprehensive printed and web-based information and opportunities to visit the campus
 - Identifying, through our PARTNERS Programme, able, talented young people of high potential, who may be at risk of not progressing to higher education because of socio-economic, personal or educational disadvantage factors, and supporting them in the transition from school or college to the University
 - Collaborating with the other universities and colleges in the region, through regional projects and initiatives such as the government's Aimhigher programme and Lifelong Learning Networks, to encourage progression to higher education
 - Developing our curriculum and our student support services to reflect the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

10. New outreach work (from 2006)

The University uses a proportion of its additional fee income to support the following additional outreach activities:

10.1 Graduate Ambassador Scheme – Targeted Outreach Project

- Four of the University's new graduates are employed each year, on a one-year full-time contract, to work as Graduate Ambassadors in collaboration with our student recruitment and widening participation teams. A major part of their role will be to carry out visits to schools and colleges throughout the UK to give presentations and interactive workshops to pupils about: the benefits of investing in their future through participation in Higher Education; student finance issues, including the bursary scheme; student life (to dispel myths and misconceptions); and the 'Newcastle experience' about which, as very recent undergraduate students, they will be able to give credible and contemporary information. This scheme was successfully piloted during 2005-06, and continued in a slightly revised format from 2006-07.
- The Graduate Ambassadors are fully trained, and undertake many other relevant roles, including work with local schools and colleges, involvement in the PARTNERS Programme and Summer Schools, contributing to relevant University recruitment publicity materials, and the development of projects, resources and materials to support our widening participation work. They also contribute to post-application events, offering accommodation tours and talks on student finance to visiting applicants and their parents. In the process, they gain valuable employability skills preparing them for their own future careers.
- The Graduate Ambassadors are carefully selected to ensure that they are credible ambassadors in the context of our widening participation target groups.
- The Graduate Ambassadors have enabled the University to extend the reach of its widening participation activities beyond the North East region.
- Since October 2005, the University's widening participation and student recruitment teams have also worked closely with our School of Education and Communication Studies to ensure that each year's cohort of **PGCE students** is fully trained and equipped to promote the benefits of Higher Education, and the range of subjects available, during their periods of teaching practice.
- The Graduate Ambassadors Targeted Outreach Project is supplemented by a new (University core-funded) **Student Ambassador** scheme. Approximately 60 current undergraduate students are employed on a part-time contract each year. They support the wide range of widening participation and student recruitment events on campus and also attend schools and colleges to talk about higher education choices, student finance and the student experience. They also provide support for our Summer School and Master Class activities.

10.2 Strengthening our Widening Participation Team by providing additional resources to Faculties and Schools

- Faculties and Schools play a vital role in widening participation and outreach activities, delivering the essential academic content of many events and participating in our PARTNERS Programme and Students into Schools schemes. Involvement in such work is often on the basis of goodwill and is subject to time constraints and other pressures.
- The University provides additional funding to Faculties and Schools so that the enthusiastic champions of our widening participation and outreach work can be supported in their contribution to activities such as: Master Classes; Summer Schools and other residential events; development of exciting materials to enthuse young people about learning; visits to schools and colleges; pre-application open days, taster events and conferences for students; subject-specific development activities for teachers; and work to encourage, retain and 'nurture' applicants from target groups to maximise their opportunities for progression.

10.3 Extension of the PARTNERS Programme into schools and colleges with a large black and minority ethnic population

- As part of our drive to extend our widening participation activities and impact beyond the immediate region, we continue to extend our flagship PARTNERS Programme to schools and colleges (an increase of 10 initially from the 2003 baseline) in key areas (eg Kirklees Local Authority) which have a high black and minority ethnic population, in order to encourage more qualified young people from these groups to apply to the University. It is estimated that approximately 2,400 additional students per annum will have the opportunity to participate in PARTNERS events, and that up to 100 per annum will potentially benefit from the supported entry route.

10.4 Work to raise awareness of deaf and disabled students

- The University continues to offer awareness-raising events and / or publicity for deaf and disabled students (working with Northumbria University). We ensure that all of our aspiration-raising, outreach and progression activities are inclusive, accessible and open to students with a disability. We also offer in-school presentations on the additional resources and support available and specifically encourage deaf and disabled students to consider the PARTNERS Programme supported entry route.

10.5 Looked After Children

- The support and progression of Looked After Children is a key widening participation priority. Children from care backgrounds are encouraged to identify any particular support needs prior to entry and are also automatically eligible for support through our PARTNERS Programme. They automatically qualify for financial support. We have recently been accredited by the Frank Buttle Trust.

10.6 Safeguarding and embedding Aimhigher activity

- The University will continue to set aside a small amount of additional fee income in 2009-10 to underwrite essential Aimhigher-related outreach activity in the context of reduced funding from HEFCE under the 2008-11 phase of Aimhigher.

10.7 Building on our extensive engagement with schools and colleges

- The University continues to build upon and enhance its formal partnerships with a wide range of schools and colleges as part of its ongoing engagement agenda, and in support of the government's encouragement for all secondary schools to have a partnership with a university.

11. Milestones for 2009-10

11.1 The University uses three sets of data as its baseline for milestones, monitoring and evaluation in the context of this Agreement:

- UCAS application and intake datasets purchased annually by the University
- HESA Performance Indicators concerning student intake (supplemented, where more detailed analysis is required, by the University's own data)
- Data provided by the Student Loans Company regarding eligibility of students for financial support.

11.2 The parameters for considering these data sets will be maintained in successive years to enable meaningful comparisons to be made.

11.3 The milestones and anticipated numbers shown below have been revised since publication of the 2007 entry Access Agreement. As UCAS choices have been reduced from 6 to 5 for 2008 entry, application numbers are likely to decrease by approximately 16% for 2008 entry, compared with 2007 entry. This makes the previous milestones relating to actual numbers of applications relatively meaningless, so these have been removed.

11.4 An additional milestone category, relating to students from the North East (where most widening participation activity necessarily takes place) has been added where relevant.

11.5 The milestones will be further revised on an annual basis.

11.6 Young students from lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC groups 4 - 7)

- Proportion of applications to increase from 21.6% in 2003 to approx 24% in 2010
- HESA performance indicator for intake of young students to increase from 21% in 2003 to 24% in 2010
- Percentage of young students entering Newcastle University from NS-SEC4-7 from the North East to increase from 29.2% in 2003 to 34% in 2010 (well ahead of the University's national HESA benchmark of 25% approx)

11.7 Young students from low participation neighbourhoods

(NB: The HESA benchmarks and calculation methodology for this indicator has changed. The milestones below refer to the original methodology)

- Proportion of applications to increase from 11.5% in 2003 to 12% in 2010
- HESA performance indicator for intake of young students to increase from 10% in 2003 to 11.5% in 2010
- Percentage of young students entering Newcastle University from low participation neighbourhoods from the North East to increase from 21.93% in 2003 to 24% in 2010 (at least double the University's HESA sector benchmark of approximately 11%)

11.8 Students with a disability

- Proportion of applications by students indicating a disability (including those with dyslexia) to remain stable at approximately 4%
- HESA performance indicator for intake of students in receipt of the Disabled Students' Allowance to remain stable at the 2003 entry figure of approximately 3.3%

11.9 Students from black and minority ethnic groups

- Proportion of applications to increase from 6.4% in 2003 to 6.85% in 2010
- Percentage intake to increase from approximately 4.7% in 2003 to approximately 6.00% in 2010
- Percentage of students entering Newcastle University from the North East from black and minority ethnic backgrounds to increase from 5.98% in 2003 to 8% by 2010

11.10 Students eligible for bursaries

- Proportion of new undergraduate entrants eligible for Newcastle University Undergraduate Bursaries to be approximately 30% in 2009-10
- Number of PGCE students eligible for bursaries to remain stable at approximately 50 in 2009-10.

11.11 Outreach and activity milestones

- 4 Graduate Ambassadors to be employed each year from 2006 (with a pilot in 2005-06)
- Graduate Ambassadors to make approximately 100 visits to schools and colleges per annum, to deliver talks and activities to approximately 60 students in each school / college (approximately 30,000 students in total over five years).
- 5 further schools and colleges to join PARTNERS in 2008-09 (for 2009 entry), bringing the total to 105 schools and colleges.
- Up to 40 students from black or minority ethnic groups to apply to the University through the PARTNERS Programme in 2008.
- At least 70 deaf and disabled students and advisers to attend awareness-raising events organised jointly by Newcastle University and Northumbria University in 2009-10.
- Achieve Frank Buttle Trust accreditation during 2007-08 for our work to support Looked After Children and maintain in subsequent years.

12 Monitoring, evaluation and review

- 12.1 The University's performance against the above applications milestones will be monitored annually in February/March (on receipt of the relevant UCAS datasets).
- 12.2 Monitoring of performance against HESA benchmarks will be undertaken on publication of the annual Performance Indicators (September).
- 12.3 The University will report to HEFCE on relevant widening participation activity through the Annual Monitoring Statement in July each year.
- 12.4 The University will report to OFFA each year as required by the annual monitoring processes.
- 12.5 Within the University, the effectiveness of the activities and bursary schemes included in the Access Agreement will be reviewed and evaluated annually in October / November by University Teaching and Learning Committee. Recommendations for any revisions to the Access Agreement will be discussed initially with OFFA before being considered and agreed by the Student Finance Advisory Group, Student Finance Committee and Executive Board (if appropriate), and then submitted to OFFA for approval.

Annexes:

1. Summary of current widening participation outreach activity at Newcastle University
2. Baseline application and performance data on which the milestones are based
3. Russell Group Statement on widening participation

Annex 1: Newcastle University : Widening Participation outreach activities

Widening Participation Strategy and Priorities

As a civic university which engages fully with our community, the city and the region, our Widening Participation Strategy includes extensive work with schools and colleges in target areas to promote progression, participation and flexible access. We also seek to attract and retain talented students from all parts of the UK. The University's Widening Participation Strategy is based on the following key elements of the student life-cycle:

- Raising the aspirations and awareness of young people and their parents and teachers, adults and other potential learners, to encourage participation in higher education
- Working with schools and colleges to raise attainment
- Working within communities to engage people of all ages in lifelong learning
- Provision of information, advice and guidance to support potential applicants in making informed choices
- Pre-entry activities and encouraging applications
- Facilitating admissions and conversion of applications to registrations
- Supporting student retention and success
- Developing employability skills for undergraduate students and adult lifelong learners
- Developing our curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse student body

In all of its work to widen and increase participation, the University works both as an individual institution, and as part of a number of regional and national initiatives, including: Aimhigher; Lifelong Learning Networks; Young Gifted and Talented Learner Academy; the Russell Group Association for Widening Participation; HELOA (Higher Education Liaison Officers' Association) and the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust etc.

A summary of some key elements of current outreach work is given below.

Raising Aspirations

Raising aspirations and awareness is a vital element of widening participation activity and the University has been actively involved in this area of work for a number of years.

The Students into Schools Project, a joint project with Northumbria University, established in 1993, is the focus for a wide range of activities (a few of which, marked *, are no longer delivered but are included for completeness). More than 10,000 undergraduate students have participated since 1993:

- Student tutoring: 500+ undergraduate students work in approximately 200 regional schools and colleges and community settings each year to provide positive role models and raise aspirations. Students can be tutors on a voluntary basis, but for most, their involvement is formally accredited as part of their degree programme.
- Community placements include, for example, work at St James' Park Learning Centre: Student tutors assist with delivery of an IT-based programme focusing on literacy, numeracy and ICT set within a sport context. Recent NFER research demonstrated that the reading age of participants increased by 2 years on average.
- Student Associate Scheme: Involvement in this national initiative is co-ordinated through the Students into Schools Project. 100 Newcastle University students support teaching in schools in priority subject areas (eg Maths and Chemistry). Students receive a payment to help raise aspirations of pupils and gain an insight into teaching as a career.
- Awareness-raising activity at Newcastle Foyer*, with student tutors involved in one-to-one work to promote study-based skills / GCSE / life skills and some residential activities and campus focused events
- Awareness raising hands-on science activities at Newcastle Discovery Museum.
- Males into Primary Teaching*: a project to encourage more men to consider teaching in primary schools
- ACE days / ACE weeks: activity days or sessions mainly aimed at Year 10 pupils to give them an introduction to higher education. Two ACE weeks are held each year, involving approximately 800 pupils at Newcastle University.
- Apprentice Students On Campus (ASC Days): Raising aspirations of pupils and their parents. Approximately 560 Year 6 pupils and 75 parents have participated in the most recent event.

- Community Placements: Student tutors take part in a wide range of community placement activities under the auspices of the Higher Education Active Community Fund (HEACF) project
- Support for the PARTNERS Programme and other widening participation activity: student tutors are involved in a wide range of activities, including student shadowing, involvement in parents' evenings, Master Classes, other campus-based events and the University's three annual Summer Schools.
- Looked After Children: approximately 60 Year 10 and Year 11 students benefit from a programme of intensive activities and follow-up work through an initiative run jointly with Northumbria University and Sunderland University, in partnership with Tyne and Wear Aimhigher and social services.

The HEFCE / ESF-funded Year 10 Higher Education Summer School is a three day residential Summer School for Year 10 pupils from widening participation backgrounds. The University offers 200 places each year. The Summer School is designed to give a taste of University life and introduce students to HE study. Regional briefing sessions are held in April to inform pupils and parents about the Summer School. Approximately 1500 students have taken part to date.

PARTNERS Programme Year 11 activities: "A Student Guide to Student Life" uses student tutors in a range of activities to raise awareness of opportunities available in higher education and to dispel myths and misconceptions about university. Approximately 20 local schools (600 pupils) take part each year. The event is targeted at year 11 students who have the potential for higher education, but who are at risk of dropping out of education at age 16. The event is also taken and delivered in PARTNERS schools in Cumbria and Kirklees.

Raising Attainment:

The University works closely with regional schools and colleges, and with initiatives supported by Excellence in Cities / Aimhigher, and delivers:

- **Year 10 Master Classes:** held over three successive Saturdays on campus in February / March each year. Approximately 10 subject areas and 400 pupils across Newcastle and Northumbria universities (200 at Newcastle University).
- **Master Classes / Taster Programmes for Year 12/13** students in a range of disciplines to support and enrich A Level / AVCE study. Approximately 10 subject areas and 200 students per annum
- **CPD programmes for teachers** and progression coaches, including updating and training sessions for relevant staff on issues to do with higher education progression.

The University has recently committed £50,000 to support the bid for Specialist Enterprise College status by All Saints College, Newcastle, under a unique partnership arrangement including Newcastle LA, the University and the Diocese. The further development of our extensive partnerships with schools and colleges is under way.

Also under development are a range of activities to raise aspirations, awareness and attainment, and promote progression to STEM subjects, as part of Newcastle University's work as a strategic partner in the **Newcastle Science City** initiative. As part of this programme, the University also delivers approximately 90 different programmes of activity in STEM subjects for young people across the region each year, delivered largely by staff in the Faculties of Science Agriculture and Engineering and Medical Sciences. In 2008-09 **STEM Interns** will be appointed to develop curriculum-relevant resources for delivery by Student Ambassadors in schools. These developments are being supervised by teacher consultants.

Pre-entry and Admissions-related Activities

In 1999, the University introduced **the PARTNERS Programme**, to encourage progression to the University from state schools and colleges in the region. PARTNERS is the vehicle for delivery of many of the University's widening participation activities, including regional initiatives under the Aimhigher programme. Recognised as an example of good practice by HEFCE and UUK, the programme has now completed eight years of operation. To date, 1,104 individual students have commenced study at the University with the support of the Programme, and approximately 250 more are expected to join the University in September 2008. PARTNERS currently involves formal partnerships with 105 schools and colleges in the North East, Cumbria and Kirklees LA. All academic schools (220+ degree programmes) participate in the PARTNERS Programme.

The PARTNERS Programme offers a range of awareness- and aspiration-raising pre-entry activities, together with an alternative supported entry route, which enables participants to demonstrate their potential for success at the University by completing an Assessed Summer School. It is targeted at young people in state schools and colleges from lower socio-economic groups; low participation neighbourhoods; low income families; schools / colleges where the average GCSE and / or A level performance is significantly below the national average; and individuals recommended for inclusion by schools and colleges on the basis of other identified personal or educational disadvantage factors. Conditional offers made to PARTNERS UCAS applicants include successful completion of the Assessed Summer School together with A level/AVCE achievement at a slightly reduced level than the normal offer for the course (e.g. BBB instead of AAA). The programme is subject to all of

the University's normal Quality Assurance procedures and has been approved by University Teaching and Learning Committee.

Year 12/First Year college activities (available to all students from the relevant schools and colleges) include **visits and talks**, **Student Shadowing**; **HE: The Inside Story**; and a residential **Bitesize Uni** (280 places).

Year 13/Final Year college activities include: **talks and visits** (including **advice on UCAS procedures**); a further **subject-specific Student Shadowing visit**; a **Finance and Assessed Summer School Information Evening**; **small-group tutorials** prior to the Summer School; and conclude with the **Assessed Summer School** in July.

The Assessed Summer School includes a major Academic Subject strand together with sessions to support the development of HE study skills, personal skills and effective learning styles. Students are assessed on their performance in the academic project and evidence of generic HE study skills. They produce a reflective personal learning record to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and support needs. The Summer School includes diagnostic testing in numeracy, IT and Communications/English, and provides access to facilities including the library and computing networks. Learning is supported by online provision using Blackboard. Entry to the University's degree programmes is determined on the basis of successful completion of the Assessed Summer School together with achievement of specified grades/points at A levels/AVCE.

Overall UCAS applications to the University from PARTNERS schools have increased by 64% since the programme commenced in 1999. The profile of the University has been significantly raised in the participating schools and colleges. Better links with staff in the schools and colleges are facilitating other developments including the establishment of "schools groups" linking academic departments with teachers to discuss curriculum and progression issues, the development of curriculum support materials for schools, and subject or progression-related updating activities for teachers.

Post-entry, a range of initiatives seeks to ensure that the risk of drop-out is minimised. For example, a 'How's it going so far?' review session identifies any problems early in the first semester. PARTNERS entrants are encouraged to participate in the Students into Schools Project, and to support widening participation activities, gaining valuable employability skills in the process and often going back to their own school or college to inspire future generations of students. Students who live at home receive additional support, including a home affiliation scheme offering them access to facilities at the University's Halls of Residence. Academic monitoring of students who entered the University through the PARTNERS Programme shows that, in general, they are fulfilling the potential identified in the Assessed Summer School, and progressing at least as well as their peers. Some have been the top students in their year, some have graduated with first class honours and many have won awards and prizes. A number have progressed to careers in work relating to widening participation, for example as progression coaches in local schools.

The following statistics give an indication of the scale of the University's outreach activity:

- Each year, approximately 500 undergraduate students (from Newcastle and Northumbria) act as positive role models to raise aspirations in approximately 300 local schools and colleges.
- Approximately 1600 year 10 pupils attend ACE events each year (across Newcastle University and Northumbria University)
- 300 pupils (years 5 – 8)(and their parents and extended families) attended the ASC (Apprentice Students on Campus) days in December 2007
- Approximately 100,000 students have attended various PARTNERS events since 1999
- At least 6,000 students have taken part in residential summer schools since 2000
- The Higher Education Summer School and Bite Size Uni in 2008 offered residential places for a total of 530 students
- Approximately 1543 Year 10 and Year 13 students have attended Master Days or Saturday morning Master Classes at Newcastle University over the past 3 years
- 1,104 individual supported PARTNERS students have entered the University so far
- At the 2008 PARTNERS Programme Assessed Summer School, there were 293 participants, representing over 13,000 learner hours.
- In 2003, of all students from PARTNERS schools and colleges who applied through UCAS for an undergraduate degree course anywhere in the UK, approximately 30% applied to Newcastle. (later figures not yet available)
- Entrants to Newcastle University from schools and colleges in the North East have increased by almost 87% (2006, compared with 1999). By comparison, the number of North East students entering Higher Education anywhere in the UK has increased by 12.5%.

FE and Mature students

Considerable work is under way to seek to increase progression from the region's FE colleges.

Recent / current activities include:

- Study skills sessions for FE students on the following topics: Essay and report writing; Critical thinking; Coping with new situations/student life; Interview Techniques; Presentation Skills; Self-esteem and personal development; Time management and University Teaching, Learning and Assessment methods (now via the PARTNERS Programme rather than as a separate project).
- Higher Education- the Inside Story, an event on campus to give FE and mature students an insight into student life and relevant information about progression opportunities.
- Get Ahead: an Aimhigher-funded collaborative project involving all of the region's Universities, and co-ordinated by Newcastle University. This involves presentations, events and publicity materials relevant to over 500 mature students throughout the region.
- A Disability awareness conference, which aims to emphasise the range and breadth of opportunities and support available within HE in the North East.
- Expert information and advice for FE and mature students, via the Enquiries Service
- Presentations to FE / mature students and attendance at FE events
- FE staff development opportunities on topics such as: the UCAS process and writing a UCAS reference, Student Finance and the PARTNERS Programme.
- Admissions tutor training and FE qualification workshops
- Mature Student Orientation Programme at the beginning of the year
- Visit Day information sessions for prospective mature students

Other activities/developments include:

- Inclusion of FE students following vocational programmes in the PARTNERS supported entry programme
 - Incorporation within the PARTNERS Programme of a Pre-entry Mathematics module for FE students studying AVCE, BTEC National or Access qualifications who intend to progress to physical sciences and engineering degree programmes at the University but have not studied sufficient Mathematics to be considered for entry at Level 1.
 - PARTNERS for Mature students
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Annex 2: Relevant baseline and performance data for Newcastle University, 1999-2003

1. Performance indicators for students from the North East

One indicator of the success of the University's widening participation activities (which necessarily have a regional focus) is the fact that, for students who from the North East, the University consistently exceeds HEFCE / HESA key widening participation benchmarks, with 85.44% from state schools and colleges; 39% from HEFCE social groups 3 and 4, and 21.6% from low participation neighbourhoods (2003 figures). Overall, approximately 23.5% of young entrants were from the North East in 2003. Most of the University's widening participation challenges thus arise from its application and intake patterns outside the North East region.

2. Application data:

The table below shows application data (all UK applicants: numbers and percentages) for the key target groups included in the Access Agreement, together with overall growth during the period.

Number of applications in each group, showing percentage of total applicants for whom data is known.											
	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003		
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	% growth in actual numbers since 1999
disabled (all, including dyslexic)	606	3.29%	531	3.10%	754	4.16%	904	4.36%	951	4.22%	56.93%
Black & minority ethnic (all)	1083	6.1%	998	6.04%	1087	6.18%	1344	6.63%	1414	6.4%	30.56%
socio-economic groups I/IIIM, IV and V /NS-SEC 4-7 (young)	2908	17.67%	2780	18.24%	3002	18.60%	3779	21.04%	4484	21.59%	54.20%
low participation neighbourhoods (young)	1727	10.55%	1804	11.58%	1914	11.50%	2084	10.98%	2543	11.49%	47.25%

3. HEFCE / HESA Performance indicators for relevant groups

This table shows the relevant HEFCE / HESA performance indicators, sector benchmarks and location-adjusted benchmarks for the period 1999-2002 (latest available). The column relating to black / ethnic minority students derives not from HESA Performance Indicators, but from the University's own HESA data.

		Students in receipt of DSA	Young entrants from NS-SEC 4-7	Young entrants from low participation neighbourhoods	Black and minority ethnic students (from University's own data)
1999 entry	University		16%	10%	Incomplete data
	Sector benchmark		20%	10%	N/a
	Location-adjusted bmk		21%	12%	N/a
2000 entry	University	2.2%	17%	11%	6.63%
	Sector benchmark	1.1%	21%	10%	N/a
	Location-adjusted bmk	N/A	22%	13%	N/a
2001 entry	University	2.7%	17%	11%	6.14%
	Sector benchmark	1.6%	22%	11%	N/a
	Location-adjusted bmk	N/A	23%	13%	N/a
2002 entry	University	3.5%	20%	10%	5.48%
	Sector benchmark	2.0%	24%	11%	N/a
	Location-adjusted bmk	N/A	25%	13%	N/a
2003 entry	University	3.3%	21%	9.7%	4.71%
	Sector benchmark	2.4%	24%	11%	N/a
	Location-adjusted bmk	N/A	25%	13.6%	N/a

Annex 3: Widening participation in Russell Group universities: meeting our social responsibilities

The Russell Group universities believe that it is part of our social responsibility to increase and widen participation in HE and that able students from any background should be able to attend universities with the most demanding entry requirements. The Group also acknowledges the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body.

The educational opportunities offered by Russell Group universities are distinctive, especially in relation to subjects such as Medicine, and the Group is concerned to ensure that a wide range of students can benefit from these opportunities.

Measures to address this include the development of specialist progression pathways to highly competitive and demanding subjects such as Medicine. Experience and good practice from these pilot projects is disseminated throughout the Russell Group in order to support the development of similar projects.

Given the generally high entry requirements within Russell Group universities, measures to raise attainment and support high achievers are an important part of members' widening participation programs. The Russell Group believes that the outcomes of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth's 'Higher Education Gateway' project could be of real interest to member institutions. The Group is committed to attracting and admitting those most able to benefit from the type of courses we offer and looks forward to contributing to the project as appropriate.

The Russell Group universities are committed to supporting students in financial need through bursaries or other appropriate forms of financial assistance. In 2003-2004 member universities were pleased to provide bursaries from their own funds amounting to well over £3m; provision from 2006 will represent a significant proportion of additional fees income.

Much of member universities' work with schools and colleges helps raise aspirations, awareness and attainment among potential students on behalf of the whole higher education sector. University visits, summer schools, taster sessions and a variety of other learning experiences make significant and substantial contributions to the broader widening participation agenda.

The brochure 'Widening Participation in Russell Group Universities' summarises selected activities and initiatives. This publication was commissioned in 2003 by the then chairman of the Russell Group, Professor Michael Sterling, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham.

The Russell Group Association for Widening Participation was founded in June 2000 and all Russell Group universities are actively involved. The Association's members are united in their primary aim of widening participation in research-led universities. Regular meetings promote the sharing of good practice and the development of joint initiatives. The Group is supported by the Russell Group Secretariat.

October 2004

Statement provided by the Russell Group Association for Widening Participation