

This Access Agreement between Newcastle University and the Office For Fair Access (OFFA) covers the period from 1 September 2015 until 31 August 2016 (academic year 2015-16). It relates to Home (UK and eligible EU) undergraduate and PGCE students entering the University from September 2015.

Continuing UK/EU students who entered Newcastle University prior to 2015 (from 2006) should refer to the University's Access Agreement for their year of entry for details of financial support schemes that apply to them.

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PART 1: CONTEXT AND PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Newcastle University is committed to widening participation (WP) and fair access. We believe that **ability should be able to access opportunity, regardless of circumstance**. We aim to admit able, highly-motivated and enthusiastic students of all ages, and from all backgrounds and contexts, and to provide **education for life**, leading to strong retention and employability outcomes and optimum opportunities for our graduates to fulfil their career aspirations. As a **world-class civic university**, we aim to marry excellence with relevance and to respond to the needs and demands of civil society. We see our activities in WP and fair access as a natural consequence of our aims and values and our commitments to social renewal.
- 1.2 **Our record of Widening Participation in the North East is excellent**. We have been working for more than 20 years with schools and colleges to promote progression, participation and flexible access in the North East, which has the lowest national level of participation in higher education in England.
- 1.3 We have a **leading role in national and regional collaborative work** to promote WP and fair access. Newcastle University leads Realising Opportunities, a national fair access programme through which fifteen highly-selective research-intensive universities work together to promote WP. In the North East, we lead the Raising Aspirations Partnership, through which three universities collaborate to deliver outreach to younger age-groups, care-leavers, disabled students and their parents, teachers and advisers.
- 1.4 We attract **students of high ability and potential from all parts of the UK**, though approximately half are from the three northern regions of England: the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North West.
- 1.5 Our admissions policies and practices are based on principles of **integrity and fairness**, in which each applicant's ability, achievements and potential are carefully assessed.
- 1.6 Our Access Agreement commitments and our Admissions Policy take account of our responsibilities under the **Equality Act 2010**. The targets in our Access Agreement are reflected in our Single Equality Policy in terms of the admission of under-represented groups. Fair access issues and relevant data are considered throughout the cycle by the University's Undergraduate Recruitment and Admissions Monitoring Committee and progress is reported to the University's governing bodies through our annual Equal

Opportunities Monitoring report. Equality impact assessments are carried out in relevant areas of work relating to admissions and fair access.

- 1.7 We recognise that many students may have concerns about the financial costs of Higher Education. Our scholarships and bursaries will provide **financial support for up to a third of our students** by 2017-18.
- 1.8 For those who choose to study at Newcastle University, we offer challenging, flexible and relevant degree programmes, taught by experts whose research enriches the learning environment for all of our students. Our commitment to providing education for life is demonstrated by extensive 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 **excellent record of graduate employability**.
- 1.9 The University takes a **strategic whole-institution approach** to widening participation and fair access. Promoting, encouraging and supporting diversity is embedded in the University's key strategies: *Vision 2021*, the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy, the Equality Strategy and the Student Recruitment Strategy. The Access Agreement itself has been developed by a **cross-University Working Group** involving representatives from the Students' Union, Faculties and key Student Services, reflecting the importance of a seamless and coherent student journey throughout the whole life-cycle.
- 1.10 The University may review the provisions and commitments of this Access Agreement in the event of a change of government or policy.

PART 2: FEE LIMITS AND FEE INCOME ABOVE £6000

- 2.1 In the academic Year 2015-16, Newcastle University will charge **an annual tuition fee of £9,000** for full-time undergraduate degree programmes and the full-time Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme. **This fee applies to Home (UK and EU) undergraduate and PGCE students entering Newcastle University in 2015 and to returning undergraduates who entered from 2012 onwards.**
- 2.2 The fee for **returning undergraduate students** who entered the University prior to 2012 will be £3,465.
- 2.3 The provisions of this Access Agreement do not apply to certain programmes (or parts of programmes) funded under contract by the Department of Health¹. This includes the following fully or partly NHS-funded programmes or years: the undergraduate degree in Speech and Language Sciences; the Higher Education Diploma in Dental Hygiene and Therapy; the fifth year of the five-year programmes in Medicine and Dentistry; and the four-year accelerated Medicine degree for graduates.
- 2.4 **Placement Year fees** for students entering Newcastle University from 2012 onwards are as follows:
 - a) Students on a part-year work or study abroad placement, including a part-year ERASMUS placement, will pay the normal full fee for their programme of study
 - b) Students undertaking a full year work placement or study abroad year which is additional to the standard programme, and which does not contribute to the final degree classification, will pay a fee of £1,000.
 - c) Students on a full year work placement or study abroad year that is fully assessed and contributes to the final degree classification, replacing a year of study in Newcastle, will pay fees as follows for the year out:
 - Students studying for a full year overseas or on an ERASMUS placement: £1,350
 - Students on a non-ERASMUS business / industry placement year: £1,800
 - d) An optional 'year out' in which the student suspends study (i.e. is not registered with the University) incurs a zero fee.
- 2.5 The University's fee levels, scholarships and financial support for eligible students are reviewed each year. **Our fee levels may be increased in future years if the Government raises the maximum fee cap amount.**

¹ This funding is in the form of a National Health Service (NHS) bursary
University of Newcastle upon Tyne, trading as **Newcastle University**: Access Agreement for 2015 entry (April 2014).

2.6 Once approved, the approach to fees described in this Access Agreement will remain in force for the duration of study of undergraduate students who enter Newcastle University in 2015.

2.7 The University's estimated fee income above £6,000 per student is summarised below:

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total (estimated) number of students paying £9,000	11,987	13,763	14,421	14,700	14,700
Total fee income above £6,000 per student	£35,961,000	£41,289,000	£43,263,000	£44,100,000	£44,100,000

Note: These figures exclude students undertaking placement years (fee below £6,000) and do not take account of any future increases in the fee cap.

PART 3: ACCESS ASSESSMENT AND ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE

3(a) Expenditure on additional access and retention measures

3.1 Our estimated Access Agreement expenditure is based on our current assessment (see section 3(b) below) of the University's overall performance in WP and fair access, from which we conclude that it remains appropriate to invest approximately 32% of our additional fee income over £6,000 per student (on average, over the five-year period from 2014-15) in access and retention measures. We review our level of investment on an annual basis, taking into account progress towards the targets set in this Access Agreement and the development of new ideas and initiatives.

3.2 The table below shows our financial commitments and current estimates of planned expenditure in broad categories over five years from 2014-15. **All planned expenditure is OFFA-countable.**

Activity / Scheme	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Outreach, Admissions and Fair Access (incl. staffing, infrastructure, evaluation)	£3,710,099	£3,956,943	£4,115,262	£4,264,226	£4,358,550
Student success and progression (incl. staffing, infrastructure, contingency / development)	£747,683	£837,795	£902,149	£1,049,862	£1,283,548
University matched funding contribution to the National Scholarship Programme	£2,986,032	£924,437	£514,248	£152,626	£11,623
Other (non-NSP) student financial support for students entering from 2012	£4,239,918	£7,490,407	£8,322,586	£8,656,317	£8,326,537
Bursaries for returning students (pre 2012 entry)	£642,000	£133,750	£37,450	£0	£0
Total estimated expenditure on Access Agreement commitments	£12,325,733	£13,343,332	£13,891,695	£14,123,031	£13,980,258
Expenditure (excl. bursaries for returning students) as % of income above £6,000	32.49%	31.99%	32.02%	32.03%	31.7%

Note: Figures for 2014-15 were revised in December 2013 to take account of changes to the National Scholarship Programme and again in April 2014 to reflect revised estimates of student numbers and operational costs. Costs from 2015 onwards are estimates and actual expenditure in each category will depend on student numbers, eligibility for financial support, and actual delivery costs.

3.3 The University's total contribution to WP and fair access includes outreach, disability support and student success activities funded by the HEFCE Student Opportunity allocation, which supports our baseline WP strategy (reported separately to HEFCE).

3.4 The financial commitments in the table above do not include the indirect costs of employing additional Graduate Ambassadors / staff to deliver activity (office space, infrastructure, utilities etc), estimated to be approximately £166,500 per annum in steady state (from 2015-16).

3(b) Assessment of our access and retention record

3.5 The University's progress in WP is measured and monitored annually through the national HESA performance indicators and through the annual OFFA and HEFCE monitoring processes. In addition, the University undertakes an annual assessment of progress in WP, based on UCAS application and entry data.

3.6 The table below summarises the latest HESA performance indicators (2012 entry) and our analysis of progress from 2011 to 2013, based on UCAS data relating to the whole cohort and our key target regions.

	Entry Year (and total intake)	State Schools and Colleges (young entrants)	Lower socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 4-7) (young entrants)	Low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs) (young entrants)	Students from black/minority ethnic backgrounds (all ages)	Students declaring a Disability (all ages)
HESA Benchmark 2012		81.2%	24.2%	7.2%	No benchmark for BME	(benchmark for students receiving DSA) 5.3% UCAS data shows all declaring disability
Whole cohort	2011 (3873)	2478/3549 69.8%	600/3086 19.44%	261/3607 7.23%	268/3843 7%	269/3873 6.94%
	2012 (3809)	2458/3496 70.3%	584/3037 19.2%	266/3544 7.5%	295/3783 7.8%	278/3809 7.3%
	2013 (4389)	3111/4136 75.2%	769/3520 21.8%	347/4092 8.5%	382/4374 8.7%	327/4389 7.5%
North East only	2011 (884)	654/717 91.2%	200/625 32.2%	143/739 19.4%	75/871 8.6%	61/884 6.9%
	2012 (801)	611/673 90.8%	191/574 33.3%	131/691 19%	60/795 7.5%	48/801 6%
	2013 (909)	742/786 94.4%	237/660 35.9%	162/780 20.8%	81/905 9%	52/909 5.7%
From North East, North West, Yorks & Humbs	2011 (2062)	1554/1850 84%	375/1613 23.2%	214/1863 11.5%	152/2045 7.4%	124/2062 6%
	2012 (1978)	1505/1798 83.65%	374/1573 23.8%	201/1815 11.07%	140/1969 7.1%	113/1978 5.7%
	2013 (2243)	1829/2082 87.85%	393/1754 22.4%	273/2060 13.6%	184/2234 8.2%	132/2243 5.9%
From target regions excluding the NE (NW, Y&H, M'side, E Mids, W Mids, Grtr London)	2011 (1881)	1268/1790 70.8%	261/1561 16.7%	93/1789 5.2%	147/1871 7.9%	116/1881 6.2%
	2012 (1942)	1302/1828 71.2%	262/1596 16.4%	103/1842 5.6%	170/1933 8.8%	129/1942 6.6%
	2013 (2255)	1678/2177 77.07%	369/1847 20%	139/2157 6.4%	230/2248 10.2%	170/2255 7.5%

(Note: percentages are based on known data, so the denominator differs in each case)

3.7 Our WP performance overall for 2013 entry has shown significant progress towards the three main HESA benchmarks, indicating that the targeted expansion of our outreach activity is beginning to take effect. This is further supported by the fact that, for 2014 entry, the number of offers made to WP students has increased by 36%.

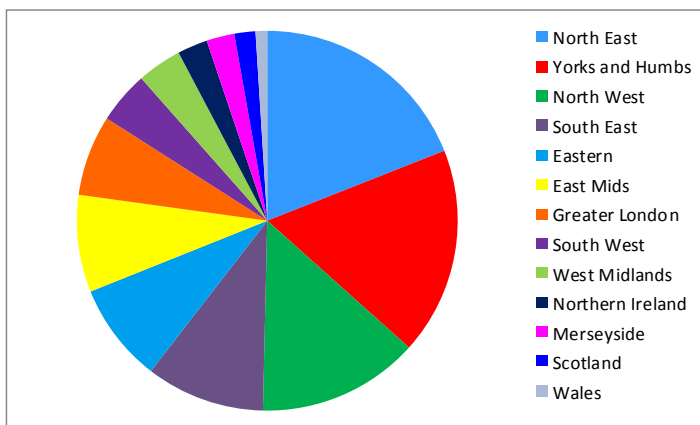
3.8 Newcastle University has an excellent record of Widening Participation in respect of students entering from the North East, where most of our intensive outreach work takes place, and for this cohort **we significantly exceed the HESA benchmarks for the three main performance indicators** and have made further progress in terms of both number and proportion in 2013. This record reflects our delivery of a progressive and sustained programme of engagement and activity over many years (for example through our PARTNERS programme and Students into Schools activities).

3.9 Approximately 19% of our 2013 young entrants were from the North East (reflecting the relatively sparse regional population), but slightly more than half (51%) of all young entrants were from the three northernmost regions of England: the North East, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North West, which have been the focus of our extended WP outreach and targeting activities. **Analysis of this larger cohort also shows strong WP performance**, with significant progress in 2013.

3.10 Newcastle University has a strong national recruitment profile and reputation, and this has an impact on our overall WP performance. Detailed analysis by region demonstrates the challenge of WP in regions that are geographically more remote. For example, the WP profile of our students from the South East is well below the sector benchmarks, yet this region is the fourth largest provider of the University's students. The impact of our outreach activity in the Northern region is therefore diluted when the total intake is analysed, a key factor in determining our progress towards overall HESA benchmarks over the past ten years. For this reason, **our WP targets in this Access Agreement focus on our performance in the identified target regions**, although we expect regional progress to have a longer-term impact upon our overall WP profile (as demonstrated in 2013).

Figure 1 (right) shows the distribution of young entrants to Newcastle University in 2012 by region of domicile. Although only 19% of the total, students from the North East constitute the largest single regional intake group. The North East, Yorkshire & Humberside and the North West together provide more than half of the total intake.

The target outreach regions in this Access Agreement (North East, North West, Yorkshire & Humberside, Merseyside, West Midlands, East Midlands and Greater London) currently constitute 72% of the total intake.



3.11 Two main diversity challenges affecting access to teacher training are: participation of men in teaching and participation of black and minority ethnic groups (BME). Recruitment of men into teaching at Newcastle has shown an encouraging increase from 30% in 2010/11 to 37.8% in 12/13. This is higher than the sector average for the same period (27.7% and 26.4% respectively). Newcastle performs less well in terms of BME recruitment into teacher training. In 11/12, intake of BME students was 3.4% (9.7% for the sector) increasing to 4.2% in 12/13 (10.1% for the sector). These low numbers reflect the regional provenance of our PGCE students. Our PGCE targets therefore focus primarily on BME intake, as well as overall completion rates for our primary and secondary PGCE courses.

3.12 Newcastle University has a strong record of student retention. HESA performance indicators show that just 2.3% of our 2011 young entrants were no longer in HE after one year (compared with a benchmark of 3.1% and a UK average of 5.7%) There is a slightly greater tendency (5.2%, UK average 10.5%) for students to drop out if they are mature or from a low participation neighbourhood (5.1%; UK average 8%).

3.13 Newcastle graduates have an outstanding employment record, with 95.2% of our 2012 UK/EU graduates progressing to employment or further study within six months of graduating.

3.14 **Through our 2015 Access Agreement, we will further develop our evidence base in order to identify key student success factors relevant to WP students throughout the student life-cycle.**

PART 4: ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND RETENTION MEASURES

4(a) Target Groups and Approach

4.1 For the purposes of this Access Agreement, the University's outreach work and financial investment are aimed particularly at students of high ability and potential from the following groups:

- Eligible students entering the University through the **PARTNERS Supported Entry Route** (including mature students and those with relevant educational or other personal disadvantage factors) or the **Realising Opportunities Scheme**
- Young entrants from **low participation neighbourhoods, lower socio-economic groups and/or lower income backgrounds**
- Students from **black and minority ethnic groups**

- Students with a **disability**
- **Looked After Children** / those who have experienced local authority care.

Our WP and student success activities also seek to support and / or engage the following groups, though we have not set specific progression targets or milestones for these cohorts: mature students; younger-age pupils, including those in primary schools; students who are parents; teachers and senior management teams in schools/colleges; parents and other influencers of potential students.

Whilst we have not specifically identified students from state schools and colleges as a WP target group in this Access Agreement, our targeted outreach activities are expected to have an impact on the proportion of entrants from the state sector. Progress will be monitored on publication of HESA performance indicators.

4.2 Our approach specifically aims to:

- Increase the overall pool of WP applicants, particularly in the North East;
- Increase the number and proportion of WP students entering Newcastle University;
- Support WP student retention and success, including appropriate financial support;
- Maximise student input into outreach and WP activity;
- Focus resource on effective activity, based on evaluation and evidence.

4.3 Milestones and targets relating to our approach are set out in Tables 7a and 7b of the Resources Annex.

4(b) Access Agreement Priority Activities

Our priority activities are summarised below:

<p>Aim 1: To increase the overall pool of WP applicants, particularly in the North East</p>
<p>Objective: To raise aspirations of young people in the North East, support informed decision making and increase overall numbers applying to university from NE schools</p>
<p>Key Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further expand and develop the University’s progressive programme of targeted, long-term outreach/WP activity from primary upwards, including using digital and social media to maximise young people’s engagement and events to engage senior staff in schools • Provide School Transport Bursaries to encourage schools to bring students onto campus • Continue to lead and develop the collaborative Raising Aspiration Partnership between Newcastle, Northumbria and Sunderland universities • Develop the range of activities/resources on Teachers’ Toolkit and further integrate it into University-schools marketing in order to increase teacher and University staff engagement
<p>Aim 2: To increase the number and proportion of WP students entering Newcastle University</p>
<p>Objective: To increase WP applications and intake by increasing the volume and geographic and digital reach of outreach activity</p>
<p>Key Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and expand the PARTNERS Programme supported entry route nationally using a blended delivery model • Develop the Students’ Union Outreach Programme to enable students and alumni to visit former schools and colleges • Continue to lead and develop the national Realising Opportunities collaborative WP scheme • Provide targeted support pre-entry and better information and signposting for identified WP groups – in particular mature students, care leavers, disabled students, student parents, parents & influencers, BME students, Asylum Seekers and prospective postgraduate students

- Develop an **Admissions Strategy** that supports the recruitment of WP students in the context of removal of Student Number Controls

Aim 3: To support WP student retention and success:

Objectives:

- To understand the evidence base for WP students in the University and develop action plans accordingly
- To provide appropriate support for students to promote health and wellbeing (for financial support, see below)
- To develop skills for life and support successful transition into employment and/or further study

Key Actions:

- a) Developing the evidence base
 - **Set up a WP Data Project involving key University support services involved in the student journey to gather and analyse** information on current students to enable the development of appropriate and timely interventions to support progression and student success
 - **Further investigate statistically significant trends relating to Equality and Diversity**
- b) Support and wellbeing
 - Provide **targeted support, pre- and post-entry for students with additional support needs** to facilitate student progress and wellbeing (eg academic support, transition, induction, financial advice and mental health support)
 - **Co-ordinate, develop and better promote the academic services available to support students' academic skills post-entry**
- c) Employment and employability skills
 - Undertake **research** (questionnaire and focus groups) with **current students who entered the University via the PARTNERS Programme and WP students, to identify what careers support they need and when.** Develop a **pilot programme of appropriate interventions** for these students, based on findings
 - **Increase the number of WP students engaged in skills development opportunities** (eg Career Development Module, NCL+ opportunities) through appropriate and targeted marketing
 - **Maximise on campus employment opportunities** for our students
 - Engage **alumni throughout the student life-cycle to raise aspirations and support students with employment skills**
 - Develop our **Postgraduate WP activity** alongside our work as a strand leader in the collaborative HEFCE-funded Postgraduate WP pilot project, supporting WP students into further study or employment

Aim 4: To provide appropriate financial support

Objective: To provide a package of financial support for students that encourages recruitment and supports student success

Key Actions:

- Provide a **generous package of scholarships and bursaries** to students from low-income backgrounds and other under-represented groups (See section 5)
- Provide **bursaries for students from low income backgrounds to encourage WP students to participate in student clubs and societies**
- Provide **face-to-face advice on financial support (in person, via workshops and webinars)** to WP students and their parents

- **Provide additional hardship funding for relevant UK students.**

Aim 5: To maximise student input into outreach and WP

Objective: Student-led outreach activity and student-focused post-entry support

Key Actions:

Involve students in developing and delivering the strategy for WP, and students and new graduates in all stages of the student life-cycle, through, for example:

- **Collaboration with the Students' Union to develop Access Agreement priorities**
- **A dedicated post in the Students' Union to support outreach and encourage student/alumni engagement**
- **Student-focused market research to understand the barriers relating to application and successful progression for WP students**
- **Student ambassadors and new graduates involved in developing and delivering University outreach**
- **Peer support for current students**

Aim 6: Focusing resource on what works, based on evaluation and evidence

Objective: To focus on impact, outcomes and continuous quality improvement of outreach and student support activity

Key Actions:

- Develop **research informed-practice** using national and local research
- Continue **implementation of framework for evaluation**
- Continue to **embed the use of the Higher Education Tracker (HEAT) Database to underpin all University outreach activity in schools, faculty teams and central services**. Use data reports to enable effective targeting of resources

PART 5: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- 5.1 The University provides generous financial assistance to students from lower income backgrounds and target under-represented groups. Students entering the University in 2015, 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 scholarship support according to the criteria below.
- 5.2 Although recent OFFA research indicates that cash bursaries may not affect students' choice of institution, our assessment of the applications for hardship support over the past five years shows that bursaries play an important part in reducing the financial burdens and debt for individuals. It is also clear that students favour money that supports their living costs, rather than fee discounts that will only have a marginal impact in terms of eventual loan repayment and no impact at all on their monthly repayments once they start work. Section 9 provides more evidence to support these statements. Our financial support for 2015 entry focuses on the provision of cash bursaries to provide optimum support and student choice.
- 5.3 Our overall package of support provides: targeted financial support for the duration of undergraduate study; additional funding for hardship support; and a wide range of paid placements and work opportunities on campus. We have also reviewed and minimised additional costs to students and provide financial support towards the costs of compulsory field trips.
- 5.4 Newcastle University will fulfil all of its commitments to returning students who entered prior to 2012. Full details are included in the [Access Agreement for 2011 entry](#) (available on the OFFA website).
- 5.5 Our Student Financial Support for **2015 entry Home fee undergraduate students** is as follows:

Household Income	Amount of Award	a) <u>Newcastle University Opportunity Scholarships for students from the UK</u>
Up to £25,000	£2,000 per year	Paid as a cash bursary to all eligible UK-domiciled entrants in 2015
£25,001-£35,000	£1,000 per year	Paid as a cash bursary to all eligible UK-domiciled entrants in 2015

Household Income	Amount of Award	b) <u>Newcastle University Access Scholarships</u>
Up to £42,600	£500 per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For UK Home Undergraduates who live in a Low Participation Neighbourhood <u>or</u> who enter Newcastle University through the PARTNERS supported entry route or the Realising Opportunities scheme. Paid as a cash bursary in addition to any Scholarship for which students may be eligible under (a) above

Household Income	Amount of Award	c) <u>Newcastle University Promise Scholarships and Laidlaw Scholarships</u>
Up to £15,000	Up to £9,000 per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 20 Promise Scholarships awarded to students of high ability from very low income backgrounds Paid as a fee discount of £4,500 plus a cash bursary of £4,500 per year In addition to meeting household income criteria, students must achieve (or have already achieved) at least grades AAB at A level or equivalent and meet specific other criteria.
N/A	Up to £9,000 per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laidlaw Scholarships awarded to <u>any</u> entrant to Newcastle University from identified schools with over 90% of students from the 13,000 most deprived wards (based on 2010 IMD data) who achieve the grades required for entry to Newcastle University through the PARTNERS Programme supported entry route (currently Excelsior College). Paid as a fee discount of £4,500 per year plus a cash bursary of £4,500 per year.

5.6 Students eligible for a Newcastle University Opportunity Scholarship or Access Scholarship will be identified on the basis of their UCAS application and household income information provided by the Student Loans Company. Students do not have to apply separately, but must submit financial information to Student Finance England (or equivalent in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland) for assessment.

5.7 Students eligible for consideration for a Newcastle University Promise Scholarship will be invited to submit a two-stage application. Further information is provided [online](#).

5.8 Students eligible for a Laidlaw Scholarship will be identified automatically and do not have to apply separately. These scholarships are funded 50% by Newcastle University and 50% by Lord Laidlaw.

5.9 The Student Financial support arrangements described in this Access Agreement do not apply to students studying on certain programmes (or parts of programmes) funded under contract by the Department of Health². Specifically:

- Students on the graduate entry accelerated medicine degree are not eligible for funding under the provisions of this Access Agreement.

² This funding is in the form of a National Health Service (NHS) bursary
University of Newcastle upon Tyne, trading as **Newcastle University**: Access Agreement for 2015 entry (April 2014).

- Students funded by the NHS for any part of their course are not eligible for Newcastle University Opportunity Scholarships, Access Scholarships, Promise Scholarships or Laidlaw Scholarships in the year(s) when they receive NHS funding. This includes: all years of the undergraduate degree in Speech and Language Sciences; the Higher Education Diploma in Dental Hygiene and Therapy; and the fifth year of the five-year programmes in Medicine and Dentistry.
- 5.10 Students undertaking a placement year where the fee payable is £1,000, £1,350 or £1,800 (see Section 2.4 above) are not eligible for a Scholarship during the placement year.
- 5.11 As part of our commitments as an exemplary accredited Buttle UK institution, we will provide financial support to students who have experienced local authority care (and who meet relevant criteria) through our Access Agreement funds to support student success.
- 5.12 All students will be informed of available scholarships at various stages in the UCAS application cycle: on application; on receipt of an offer; and during the conversion stage.
- 5.13 From the information which we have about our current students, we estimate that ca. 30% of our new entrants in 2015 are likely to receive financial support, increasing to ca. 32% by 2017-18.
- 5.14 The University's financial support schemes will be reviewed annually and may be revised to reflect changing circumstances, student needs, numbers and/or government support arrangements.
- 5.15 In addition to our Access Agreement financial support schemes, we also offer a range of bursaries, scholarships and prizes to recognise outstanding achievement (on entry or during the course). Some of these are targeted at students from lower-income backgrounds or other under-represented groups. Further information is available on our [Subject Scholarships](#) website and on individual subject websites. We include payments to relevant students in our annual monitoring return to OFFA.
- 5.16 All of Newcastle University's PGCE programmes fall into the subject categories where generous Teaching Agency (TA) Training Bursaries are available for well-qualified students. We support this drive for excellence and do not offer additional bursaries to students who are not eligible for TA support. PGCE students who suffer financial hardship whilst at Newcastle University can apply for relevant support.
- 5.17 In order to minimise the additional costs faced by students from 2012, the University has agreed that individual students will no longer be responsible for the costs relating to checking by the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly Criminal Records Bureau). For PGCE students with household income up to £42,600, the DBS costs will be funded as part of our Access Agreement Faculty commitments.
- 5.18 **Continuing students who entered Newcastle University prior to 2015** will continue to receive financial support as specified in the relevant Access Agreement for their year of entry. Students who entered in 2012 should also refer to the 2013 Access Agreement (as the financial support scheme was adjusted in 2013 to provide more generous support for some 2012 entrants).

PART 6: TARGETS AND MILESTONES

- 6.1 The University uses three sets of data for milestones, monitoring and evaluation:
- UCAS application and intake datasets purchased annually by the University;
 - HESA Performance Indicators concerning student intake;
 - Data provided by the Student Loans Company regarding eligibility of students for financial support (supplemented by the University's own data relating to non-SLC payments to eligible students).
- 6.2 Our main **Activity Targets** focus on delivery linked to the key actions. Targets have been refined, and in a number of cases made more stretching, based on progress made to date.
- 6.3 In accordance with the OFFA guidelines, the ambition of the **Impact Targets** set in the 2012 entry Access Agreement has not been changed in this Agreement. However, we have taken the opportunity to redefine and refine some targets where it makes sense to do so based on available evidence.
- 6.4 Further details are provided in the Resource Annex to this Access Agreement.
- 6.5 The University's outreach activities target state schools/colleges in the identified regions, and **our principal focus is on the targets that relate to the North East and the other target regions**. We will work

closely with teachers to target individual students from LPNs and those considered to be from lower socio-economic backgrounds (NS-SEC groups 4-7), to ensure that we particularly encourage these students to apply to and enter Newcastle University.

- 6.6 Of these two latter groups, only those from LPNs can be accurately identified at the pre-application stage (by postcode) in a way that exactly replicates how they are identified and measured for HESA's performance indicators. In preparing this Access Agreement we have set specific impact targets based on students from LPNs. Where available, we will also use IMD data and other indicators (eg eligibility for Free School Meals, Pupil Premium data) to help us to refine our targeting.
- 6.7 In setting regional targets for LPN students, we also expect to have a positive impact on the University's overall intake figures for students from LPNs and from NS-SEC groups 4-7.

PART 7: APPROVAL, MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 7.1 This Access Agreement has been considered and agreed by the University's Executive Board, and will be reported to Senate and Council (both of which include student representation).
- 7.2 The University's performance against targets and HESA benchmarks is monitored annually on receipt of UCAS data and annual Performance Indicators. This includes a particular focus on progress towards targets relating to the North East and other identified target regions or groups of regions.
- 7.3 The University reports to HEFCE and OFFA each year through the annual monitoring processes.
- 7.4 Within the University, the effectiveness of the outreach and financial support schemes included in the Access Agreement are reviewed and evaluated annually by the University Recruitment and Admissions Committee (URAC) and reported to Executive Board, Senate or Council as appropriate. Recommendations for revisions to the Access Agreement are considered and agreed by URAC (or its Chair) and by Executive Board and then submitted to OFFA for approval.
- 7.5 An important strand of the work of the University's outreach team is to focus on monitoring and evaluation to ensure that resources are targeted to give optimum impact. The purchase of the collaborative HEAT database will enable us to track the impact of our outreach and student success work throughout the student life-cycle. Our evaluation framework enables us to focus resource on activity that maximises impact; takes account of equality and diversity issues; and ensures that the outcome of evaluation directly informs the development of future activity.
- 7.6 Independent external evaluation of particular initiatives or new developments may also be commissioned, and the outcomes will be reported to OFFA as part of the annual monitoring processes.

PART 8: PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE 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. We will provide relevant information to UCAS, the Student Loans Company, UCAS Teacher Training and other relevant bodies as required.
- 8.2 Our printed 2015 Undergraduate Prospectus is supplemented by our annual [*Guide to Student Finance*](#). The Guide is revised bi-annually to reflect any mid-year changes.
- 8.3 Our website includes a postcode 'look up' tool so that students can check their eligibility for some financial support schemes.
- 8.4 We are investing significantly in digital developments to ensure that students are fully-informed about the financial support available. Potential and current students contribute to user testing processes to ensure that digital / web information is clear and easy to understand. All applicants who receive an offer of a place receive relevant further information, with additional information for identified WP applicants.

- 8.5 We regularly review and develop our website to include resources or information about student finance and other relevant topics for those who advise students. Our online [Teachers' Toolkit](#) provides a rich source of resources and events through a single portal.
- 8.6 Our WP teams and our trained Graduate Ambassadors visit schools and colleges to give presentations to teachers and pupils about student finance and provide finance information at Visit Days and post-application open days.
- 8.7 New entrants and eligible continuing students are reminded through a variety of channels about the fees and financial support schemes relevant to them for each year of study at the University. We provide one-to-one financial / budgeting support to WP students.

PART 9: CONSULTATION WITH STUDENTS

9.1 Student engagement and consultation are an important part of our annual Access Agreement planning processes. In particular, in reviewing the proposed financial support arrangements, the University has taken account of the outcomes from three key surveys:

- An online questionnaire to students who had received University bursaries (March 2011)
- A National Union of Students survey ('The Pound in your Pocket') in 2012
- A survey of 2012-entry UK undergraduates who had received either an Access Scholarship or a National Scholarship (under the terms of our 2012 Access Agreement) (March 2013).

Respondents overwhelmingly favoured the provision of cash bursaries rather than fee discounts, and there was rich qualitative evidence that cash bursaries prevent many students from experiencing financial difficulty and help them to remain on their courses, thus improving retention. Further details are provided in our 2014 Access Agreement.

9.2 The Education Officer and Welfare Officer of the Students' Union are members of the Access Agreement Working Group and are also taking responsibility for the development and delivery of key outreach and retention activities. Their Statement of Partnership is attached as Appendix 2.

Attached:

Appendix 1 - Summary of key WP schemes at Newcastle University

Appendix 2 – Statement of Partnership from Newcastle University Students' Union

Appendix 1: Newcastle University: Key Widening Participation Schemes

GRADUATE AMBASSADORS: In 2006, the University set up the [Graduate Ambassador Scheme](#), appointing a team of six Newcastle University graduates to deliver interactive face-to-face outreach activities to young people and their parents. Currently, the University employs a team of 13 Ambassadors, enabling the University to target key regions across the UK and offer a range of interactive face-to-face and virtual outreach activities to schools and colleges. The scheme is designed as a Graduate Training Scheme so Ambassadors gain valuable employability skills that prepare them for their own future careers.

PARTNERS PROGRAMME: A supported entry route for WP students who have the potential to succeed at Newcastle University, the [PARTNERS Programme](#) is one of the largest in the country and currently works with 198 schools and colleges in the North East, Cumbria, Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. Our plans include expansion of PARTNERS to become an open-access programme for eligible students from all schools in England. 2,571 students have entered the University through PARTNERS since it began in 2000. All Newcastle University's undergraduate programmes are involved in PARTNERS, which involves a progressive programme of interventions for students and their influencers. The Programme culminates in an Assessed Summer School which forms part of a student's alternative offer of a place at Newcastle University.

RAISING ASPIRATIONS PARTNERSHIP: Newcastle University leads the [Raising Aspirations Partnership](#), a regional collaboration involving Newcastle University, Northumbria University and the University of Sunderland, working together with other education partners (Local Authorities and Connexions). The Partnership supports young people aged 10-16 years and their influencers to make informed choices about Higher Education. Interventions range from information sessions for parents and carers, to programmes designed to build the confidence of young people.

REALISING OPPORTUNITIES: Newcastle University is the lead institution for [Realising Opportunities](#), a unique collaborative partnership of 15 research intensive universities delivering a national fair access scheme which promotes social and geographic mobility for WP students. Realising Opportunities (RO) has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the tracking of students through UCAS. This award-winning programme, developed through shared best practice, provides support for students through interventions designed to raise aspirations, develop skills and enable them to demonstrate their potential to succeed at a research intensive university. These interventions are offered locally and nationally and include a National Student Conference, ongoing support from a trained student mentor and an academic assessment element. Successful completion of RO results in additional consideration for applicants through UCAS from all Partner universities, and the potential of an alternative offer worth up to 40 UCAS points or equivalent, from most.

STUDENT AMBASSADORS: The University's Graduate Ambassadors programme is supplemented by the Student Ambassador Scheme. 150 current undergraduate students are employed on a part-time internship contract each year. They support the extensive range of WP and student recruitment events delivered by the University, including an intensive three year mentoring programme for over 500 students. Opportunities for students to participate in the Student Ambassador scheme are an important element of the University's work to support student retention, success and skills development.

STUDENTS' UNION OUTREACH PROGRAMME: Newcastle University Students' Union are in the process of setting up a scheme to encourage current students to go into their former school to talk about university life and the opportunities available. The scheme will provide NUSU Participation Bursaries in order to remove financial barriers to first year WP students who wish to join clubs and societies and engage in student life.

STUDENTS INTO SCHOOLS: In 1993 Newcastle University established [Students into Schools](#), a joint initiative with Northumbria University that provides undergraduate students as tutors in local schools, offering positive role models and classroom support. Approximately 180 Newcastle University students participate in the programme each year for academic credit through a Career Development Module, providing support to over 8,500 pupils and teachers in local schools.

SUBJECT-SPECIFIC OUTREACH AND TEACHERS' TOOLKIT: Faculties and Schools play a vital role in WP and outreach, delivering the essential academic content of our key WP access programmes and events. All subject-specific activities offered by the University are listed on [Teachers' Toolkit](#) – a unique online resource that brings together everything the University offers to schools and colleges, in one place.

Appendix 2: Statement of Partnership from Newcastle University Students' Union

Access, outreach and retention are of great interest to the Students' Union in today's Higher Education landscape, with a need to focus on how we engage future students. Increased tuition fees mean we must ensure Newcastle University is an accessible option, and that all students regardless of background have a positive student experience.

This year the Students' Union has been directly involved at multiple levels in the planning and delivery of access and retention activities. Two sabbatical officers have had the chance to provide formal student feedback through the Access Agreement Working Group and formal engagement in key decisions. The University and the Students' Union have taken an active step in the direction of partnership, and the Students' Union has been a co-creator of the key ideas presented in this 2015 Access Agreement.

The National Union of Students' research *Pound in Your Pocket* conducted in 2012, in which Newcastle University had the highest respondent level, presents evidence that cash bursaries are favoured by students as the means of financial support, as opposed to fee waivers which bear no impact upon a student's financial burden when trying to afford accommodation and living costs. This is reflected in the Access Agreement - bursaries have been adopted to replace fee waivers as the main level of financial support. The University offers three levels of financial scholarships which they will duly publicise so that all students can make an informed choice about applying to University: scholarships for those from low income backgrounds, those from low participation backgrounds and Promise Scholarships which involve a fee waiver of half of tuition fees and a £4,500 cash bursary. The University has also made a commitment to care leavers, a group which face further barriers to education.

The Students' Union supports the figure of 32% of income from tuition fees above £6,000 to be allocated to outreach, access and retention measures. One of the biggest assets of the Access Agreement 2015 is the identified need to shift from focusing purely on widening participation students to focussing also on other groups of students who may face barriers to entering Higher Education, such as mature students who must maintain a work-life balance. This year the University and the Students' Union are jointly working to make the campus student-friendly, for example, continuing work with student parents. We are excited that the University shares our vision of a truly diverse campus. The Access Agreement 2015 aims to increase again its outreach activities, with plans to extend geographically the schools reached via the Graduate Ambassador Scheme, PARTNERS Programme and Student Union scheme, whereby Alumni and current students return to their old school.

This Access Agreement focuses on a student life-cycle approach, considering the entirety of the student journey from initial interest into employment or further study. Through discussing the barriers that various student groups face at each stage of their University journey, we were able to create new levels of support to aid retention. The Students' Union has committed to implementing Participation Bursaries: the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular activities is central to a rounded student experience, but financial difficulty can be a barrier to involvement. The aim of this initiative is to support retention and success by making engagement in clubs and societies possible for all students.

Various targets have been set as a way of measuring the success of each of the schemes and initiatives in this Agreement, ensuring that we widen participation and create an accessible route for prospective and current students, regardless of their background. The experience of working with the University has been extremely positive. This is a relationship which will continue to grow in future years, ensuring that the student voice is at the heart of the Access Agreement.

Eve Berwin (Education Officer) and Emily Waller (Welfare and Equality Officer)

Newcastle University Students' Union

15th April 2014