

Access Agreement 2015-16



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Introduction

The University of Sussex was the first of the universities created in the 1960s from the vision of the socially responsive leaders of the day, who believed that expanding opportunity in higher education, creating and sharing knowledge at the cutting edge of disciplines, breaking down social and academic barriers and applying knowledge to the real world issues, was the way in which our country and wider society grow. This is a vision that holds true today and which underpins our Access Agreement. We remain committed to our founding principles of inclusivity and will continue to attract and support talented students, irrespective of their personal or financial background and to become an exemplar of widening access to higher education.

Our First-Generation Scholars Scheme captures the access, success and progression strategy of our Access Agreement in a coherent and easily-communicated scheme.

Summary of our First-Generation Scholars Scheme:

- Available to all home UK students with a household income of less than £42,620 per annum, as assessed by the Students Loan Company. Eligible students will receive:
In year one a £2000 rent reduction if living in University managed accommodation and a £1000 cash bursary for each year of study as long as the eligibility criteria is met

Or

A £2000 fee reduction for the first year of study for those not living in University accommodation and a £1000 cash bursary for each year of study as long as the eligibility criteria is met

- UK home students on a Foundation year will receive the rent or fee rebate for both their Foundation year and for the first year of their degree course as well as the £1000 cash bursary for each year of study as long as the eligibility criteria is met
- Care leavers will receive a cash bursary of £3000 per year.
- In subsequent years all eligible students will receive a cash bursary of £1000 per year.
- Initial teacher training students receive £600 per year.
- Students repeating a year will receive a cash bursary of £1000 as long as the criteria is met.

1. Fees, student numbers and fee income

The University will set the Home and EU undergraduate fee at the maximum allowed by the Government each year currently £9000. Erasmus students will be charged a fee of £1350*. The fee for a full year spent on placement or studying abroad which attracts academic credit (sandwich year) is £1800*.

The University is committed to re-investing additional fee income, equating to £8.2 million, in an extensive programme of widening access activities through the First-Generation Scholars Scheme.

2. Access and student success measures

The University has an OFFA Steering Group which reviews the widening participation indicators and benchmarks.

Benchmark Data

Entry from state schools and colleges	2012-13 86% (7.2% above location adjusted benchmark) 2011-12 85.2 % (7.4% above location adjusted benchmark) 2010-11 86.9% (6.5% above location adjusted benchmark) Allowing for location-adjusted-benchmark this results in a ranking of 2 out of 33 amongst English Russell Group and former 94 Group HEIs.
Entry from low participation neighbourhoods	2012-13 5.1% (In line with location adjusted benchmark) 2011-12 6.2% (1.2% above location adjusted benchmark) 2010-11 5.7% (0.1% above location adjusted benchmark) Allowing for location-adjusted-benchmark this results in a ranking of equal 8 th out of 33 amongst English 1994 & Russell Group HEIs.
Entry from lower socio-economic groups	2012-13 23% (In line with location adjusted benchmark) 2011-12 20.2% (1.3% below location adjusted benchmark) 2010-11 20.8% (2.4% below location adjusted benchmark) Allowing for location-adjusted-benchmark this results in a ranking of 15 out of 33 amongst English Russell Group and former 94 Group HEIs.
Care leavers	Holders of the Frank Buttle Trust kite mark status.
Retention	2012-13 continuation levels for young entrants was 2.8% against a benchmark of 3.4%. 2012-13 continuation levels for mature entrants was 8.7% against a benchmark of 10.7% Sussex is ranked 12 out of the 33 English Russell & 1994 Group members for these measures (HE PI T3b & T3C 2010/11).

*These figures may be subject to change but are correct at the time of publication; July 2014

Our focus remains on:

- **Investment in additional outreach activity to raise our recruitment of students from lower NS-SEC groups, with a particular focus on building on our long-term links through work with 11-16 schools**, to build aspirations and support qualification choices before GCSE-level commitments are made. This programme is informed by our evaluation of events and consultation with pupils and staff and has led to the development of the Sussex Study Experience, a year 12 attainment raising initiative, engaging academics from variety of subject areas as well as an increase in the levels of engagement with the partnership teams and an expansion in our Summer School programme.
- **Developing a programme with Primary Schools**; in recognition of our commitment to the student life cycle approach to widening participation we have introduced additional primary school activities including collaborative residential opportunities with IntoUniversity and Buddy Days as well as exploring the possibility of a formal partnership with IntoUniversity with a dedicated outreach centre in a low participation neighbourhood, close to the University.
- **Continuing to maintain our current excellent performance at student retention**, in particular for target WP groups, which convinces us that our First-Generation Scholar Scheme should remain core to the package of support offered to WP students.
- **Supporting employment outcomes for WP groups**. The First-Generation Scholars Scheme explicitly addresses the issue of improving the employment and/or further study opportunities for students from the OFFA countable groups through its programme of careers and leadership activity commencing in the first year of study and with the introduction of paid internships between the second and third year of study.
- **Outreach and aspiration-raising activity: £1.6 million**

We have increased our outreach work with both 11-16 and post-16 age groups through an expanded Schools & Colleges Partnership Programme, which provides advice and guidance around GCSE choices, mentoring support by Sussex students to raise achievement, and summer schools. During 2013-14 we engaged with 18,000 students across the programme.

- **Financial support for students: £4.1 million**

Based on current figures it is anticipated that **£2.5 million** of direct funding will be paid to students in their first and foundation year of study through our First-Generation Scholars Scheme and a further **£1.6 million** to students in their second and third years as part of the retention element of the scheme.

The financial offer within our First-Generation Scholars Scheme is designed to be attractive to students from households with an income of less than £42,600 per annum and students from low participation neighborhoods, to ensure that they are not deterred from entering HE for financial reasons and to assist them to remain on course. Eligible students in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School are also included in the scheme.

- Available to all home UK students with a household income of less than £42,620 per annum, as assessed by the Students Loan Company. Eligible students will receive:

In year one a £2000 rent reduction if living in University managed accommodation and a £1000 cash bursary for each year of study as long as the eligibility criteria is met

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- Care leavers will receive a cash bursary of £3000 per year.
- In subsequent years: a £1000 cash bursary support for each year of study.
- Initial teacher training students receive £600 per year.
- Students repeating a year of study will receive a £1000 cash bursary as long as the criteria is met.

Please note: Students eligible for an NHS bursary are not eligible for the First-Generation Scholars Scheme. Erasmus students and those on a full year spent on placement or studying abroad will not receive the First-Generation Scholars bursary during that year because they will not be paying the full fee.

- **Retention and support for improved outcomes: £2.1 million**

All students are offered a menu of options to help them with academic and skills-development, including study skills, careers and leadership coaching, work-study, research and internship opportunities. In addition our First-Generation Scholars, and those students who have self-identified as being the first in their family to go to University, receive targeted information and support to encourage them to engage with these opportunities.

3. Additional access measures

3.1 Outreach and aspiration raising

The University has continued to expand its network of school and college partners and in 2013-14 identified, and started to work with, partner primary schools.

Our ongoing work with schools in London and Croydon enables us to reach more pupils from BME backgrounds and to encourage them to consider applying to universities outside their local community. The engagement that has been developed with our full partner schools includes outreach, curriculum development input and staff development. The University's outreach programme currently starts in Year 9 to link with GCSE option choices and supports pupils through to year 13.

The outreach programme has three aims:

- To enable pupils and parents to make informed and critical choices about courses, institutions and careers.
- To develop skills and raise attainment by focusing on activities that develop the skills necessary for pupils/students to succeed in school, college and university, including direct interventions to support attainment at key transitions and in key subjects.
- To promote personal development and motivation – participants will be given the opportunity to develop transferable skills to help in education and employment. Supporting pupils to understand what motivates them and how to stay motivated.

The programme incorporates a range of activities including campus tours, taster sessions and information, advice and guidance, delivered in the school or college. The Widening Participation team works closely with academic schools within the University to develop a range of subject-specific activities and involves current students as ambassadors, tutors and mentors.

The Aiming for Law programme is designed to support access to a course leading to a professional career. Brightmed supports students interested in pursuing a career in medicine with engagement with pupils from year 9.

The University has continued to build on its successful summer schools programme targeted at Year 10 and Year 12. The year 10 summer schools focus on providing pupils with an insight into student life, whilst the year 12 programme is subject-specific and supports students making applications to a broad range of institutions.

The results of the evaluation strategy are used to inform the further development of the programme. For each activity a report is produced containing key findings, a review of contextual data relating to participating institutions and the effectiveness of targeting and recommendations. These aim to maximise the activity's contribution to the achievement of wider programme goals. This process has led to the development of a more collaborative approach towards the delivery of activity and improved understanding of what the different stakeholders can bring in terms of resource and expertise. Academic staff are involved in the design of evaluation tools and discussion of the findings and securing formal evaluative feedback from School and College staff.

Evaluation activity has resulted in securing an evidence base for our ten distinct strands of activity (summer schools; subject tutoring; revision days; subject enrichment activities; campus visits; Information, Advice and Guidance events; higher education tasters; extended programmes and staff Continuing Professional Development activity).

3.2 Collaborative outreach

We continue to work collaboratively with our local partner HEIs and through the Southern Region Widening Participation Practitioners' Network.

The University shares a collaborative outreach project with the University of Brighton, based in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS), BrightMed. Each year 50 Year 8 pupils who have no family background in higher education are recruited from local state Schools. Work

continues with these students into Year 13 with the aim to contribute towards increased diversity in the medical profession.

We continue our partnership with Aimhigher South London and with other local HEIs through the Sussex Progression and Liaison Accord. The University also offers degrees in conjunction with the University of Brighton in medicine and automotive engineering. Collaborative partnerships has continued to be a priority for the Widening participation Team and forms an integral part of our range of targeted activity across the Learner Progression Framework.

Aimhigher London South network (AHLS)

Aimhigher London South Ltd works to ensure fair access to higher education for young people from non-traditional backgrounds by linking Schools, Colleges, Universities and education providers together in order to work more effectively. AHLS works with 11 universities, 31 schools and 5 further education colleges who work together to:

- Provide impartial information, advice and guidance to learners from Year 8 – Year 13 and is developing ways of working with primary to secondary transition (Years 5 and 6).
- Share good practice at a local and regional level in order to determine what works well and that activities are effective.
- Develop and apply evaluation and monitoring methods to illustrate long-term impact.
- Improve the involvement of current students.
- Maintain and develop a long-term sustained programme of collaborative activity, that prepares learners from the network's identified target groups that enables successful and appropriate transition to HE, both inside and outside the network.
- Improve the impact of the network's collaborative activity, through the development of progression support materials in collaboration with HEI and FECs' courses and faculties, as required by schools and the FE sector.

As part of this partnership the University of Sussex hosts at least one event with at least 6 partner universities and at least 5 Schools and/or Colleges. We also contribute to further collaborative events at different HEIs. The University is involved in the development of support for targeted groups (e.g. LAC and SpLD) and contributes to staff development activities in conjunction with other members of the group, sharing experience with other HEIs through good practice events. The partnership works together to develop and improve evaluation and impact tracking systems.

In 2013-14 the University hosted an Aspirations Day as part of this partnership, with 110, Year 10 pupils. We were also involved in supporting three collaborative events at partner HEI's reaching a further 510, Year 9 students. We have also been involved in additional partnership work with the care leaver strand and provided workshops for AHLS targeted events for students with specific learning difficulties.

The Brilliant Club

The University of Sussex is a Founding Partner University of The Brilliant Club, a charity which exists to increase fair access to selective universities by recruiting, training and placing PhD students in low HE participation schools to deliver programmes of university-style learning to small groups of high-performing pupils aged 9-18 years.

The University of Sussex has a specific responsibility for helping develop The Brilliant Club's Widening Participation Programme, including trips that give pupils a real sense of the intellectual and physical environment of a university. Through these trips the pupils engage in a range of learning activities including study skills sessions and tutorials as well as outreach activities including campus tours, engaging with undergraduate students and information, advice and guidance sessions.

This is an innovative and ambitious programme reaching thousands of pupils with the aim that 80% of Year 13 pupils will apply to a highly selective university; 70% will achieve grades of ABB or higher in their A-Levels and 55% will secure a place and go on to study at a highly selective institution.

The programme has been further expanded to include large scale Brilliant Club Launch events and Graduation events for students from Years 5 to 13 with 2246 participants visiting the Sussex campus in 2013-14. Nine Sussex PhD students were also recruited to support the in-school activities organized by the Brilliant Club.

Realising Opportunities

The University of Sussex is a member of Realising Opportunities (RO), a national collaborative Partnership of research intensive universities working together to promote fair access and social mobility of students from under-represented groups. The Partnership was awarded the Times Higher Education, Widening Participation Initiative of the year 2011 and in October 2012 featured as an example of good practice in Alan Milburn's report 'University Challenge: How Higher Education Can Advance Social Mobility'.

The Realising Opportunities programme provides support for students through interventions designed to raise aspirations and enable them to demonstrate their potential for success at a research intensive university. These interventions are offered both at their local participating university, and nationally. The programme includes a National Student Conference and each student is provided with ongoing support and encouragement by a student e-mentor who is an undergraduate student from one of the Partner universities.

Pupils who successfully complete the programme, which includes a robust academic element, who apply to the participating Universities through UCAS will be given additional consideration and the potential for an alternative offer worth up to 40 UCAS points or equivalent. Realising Opportunities has a robust evaluation framework which incorporates contextual data, student aspirations and the tracking of students through the UCAS process. Each of the participating Realising Opportunities institutions has committed future funds to ensure the ongoing delivery and development of Realising Opportunities to 2016 with a financial contribution in the region of £45,000.

The aim is that 36% of students who started the Programme in Year 12, in 2013, will have progressed to a research intensive University in 2015, with 38% of students starting the programme in Year 12 in 2014 progressing to a research intensive University in 2016.

AccessHE

In 2013-14 a new collaborative partnership was formed with AccessHE whose aim is to deliver services that support progression to HE for learners from under-represented groups in London, including a strand working specifically with students with a disability.

AccessHE facilitates communication between Schools, Colleges and HEI's and delivers continuing professional development and networking opportunities for the London access community. AccessHE supports the co-ordination of access work in Schools and Colleges and works with pan-London cohorts of specific learner groups as well as piloting new ways of contacting and supporting teachers.

IntoUniversity

The University has links with IntoUniversity, providing opportunities for pupils from their centres to visit the University of Sussex. We are also working with the Aim2Attain project in Tower Hamlets; a local charity which is encouraging the public and private sectors to work with Schools in the borough. Aim2Attain is particularly concerned that 500 of the 714 students from Tower Hamlets who were progressing to university were going to five local universities and the aim is to broaden the horizons of these young people.

4. Transition, retention and employability support

Eligibility

In addition to the financial support package provided through the First-Generation Scholars Scheme students are also invited to participate in a range of transition, retention and employability support. This programme is also offered to students who self-declare as the first in their family to go to University. The various elements of the scheme are designed to provide a range of additional support options that students can choose to access in order to benefit their own academic and skills-development. These include:

- **Pre-entry:** being invited to vacation summer events on campus
- **Academic and employability support** - a package for target students that is **in addition** to the group- and web-based study skills and careers support available to all students.
- **One-to-one study skills, careers/leadership and personal development coaching;**
- **Work placement and work-study opportunities,** including mentoring in partner schools.
- **Funded internship opportunities** and other assistance to access professional career routes between years 2 and 3 of study.
- **Success after graduating from Sussex:** including access to the Careers and Employability Centre for 3 years after graduation.
- **One-to-one graduate job-seeking support** from Sussex-based Careers coaches.

Retention bursaries for subsequent years of study

Students who meet the eligibility criteria for the first-Generation Scholars Scheme qualify for a cash bursary of £1000 per year (excluding a placement year or study abroad as they will not be liable for the full tuition fee).

Care leavers continue to receive £3000 in cash for each year of study.

Our review of our current retention performance provides evidence that our current low-income bursary provision of £1000 per study year has been effective particularly in relation to keeping our retention rates for low-income and low-NS SEC groups in line with other groups.

5. Targets and milestones

5.1 Our key institutional targets - proportions of entrants¹ from:

	State schools	NS-SEC groups 4-8	Low participation neighbourhoods																								
2009/10 baseline	88%	19.3%	6.4%																								
National rank	9th	104th	40th																								
Peer group rank ²	2nd	27th	3rd																								
Proposed revised 5-year target³	90%	25%	7.5%																								
Interim targets	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>13/14</th> <th>14/15</th> <th>15/16</th> <th>16/17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>88.5%</td> <td>89.0%</td> <td>89.5%</td> <td>90.0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	88.5%	89.0%	89.5%	90.0%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>13/14</th> <th>14/15</th> <th>15/16</th> <th>16/17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>22%</td> <td>23%</td> <td>24%</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	22%	23%	24%	25%	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>13/14</th> <th>14/15</th> <th>15/16</th> <th>16/17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6.7%</td> <td>7.0%</td> <td>7.3%</td> <td>7.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	6.7%	7.0%	7.3%	7.5%
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Rationale	This target should consolidate our position at the top of national tables based on exceeding benchmark entry from state schools. Our scope for further rise on this indicator is limited, as independent schools educate 18% of the national A-level population.	This is the most stretching of the targets we have adopted, because it is the area in which we need to make most improvement. At steady state it would mean an additional 400 students from NS-SEC groups 4-8 in our student body. This 25% increase would move us well above benchmark.	This is a stretching target given the tight distribution of HEIs' performance on this indicator; it should place us ~2.0% above the benchmark, which should equate to the top 20 nationally, and being at or close to top of our peer group.																								

¹ 'Entrants' is used here to denote future student entrants who are eligible for the UK student loan scheme.

² 'National rank' is based on variance from relevant national benchmark; 'Peer group' is the English Russell & former 1994 Group members.

³ i.e. target to be achieved by 5 years from start of the 2012/13 new fee and investment regime.

5.2 Additional local targets

Target group and current baseline	5-year target: proportion of entrants	5-year target: retention and outcomes
BME students (current baseline 12%)	Target increase to 15%	Retention target to match other groups, i.e. < 5% young and <10% mature student 1st year non-completions. Employment outcomes for target groups to be in line with other groups.
Mature students (current baseline 23%)	To rise within peer group top quartile	
Disabled students (current baseline 12%)	To rise within the national top quartile	

5.3 Activity-related and ‘trajectory’ targets

In addition to these specific activity-based and ‘trajectory’ targets, we will be looking at a range of other data indicators to monitor and evaluate our progress.

Outreach activity	End-of-5-year target	Interim targets (+ milestone-point)
Numbers of partner schools and colleges	80 Full Partner schools and 40 Associate Partner schools.	Targets have been revised from the original 40 Partner and 40 Associate Partner Schools as 75 Partner Schools had been established by 2013-14.
Number of primary schools partners	10 Full Partner school	Interim milestone 5 Full Primary Partners 2013-2014. (Target exceeded with 7 partner schools in 2013-14).

Volume of engagements with:	End-of-5-year target	Interim targets (+ milestone-point)
Students	Raise individual enrolments in our First-Generation Scholars Scheme from 4000 to 7000, and increase engagements per year.	End 2013/14: First-Generation Scholars enrolments approaching 5000.
School staff	All full partner school staff to be invited to be part of an annual staff development opportunity.	Out of those invited 120 attended the 2013-14 conference.
Parents	All parents of target students in 50% of full partner schools to be invited to at least one annual information event.	This target was exceeded in 2013-14 with 65% of parents involved in events.

Retention and outcomes	End-of-5-year target	Interim targets (+ milestone-point)
Study Skills, personal development, careers and leadership engagements	>90% of First Generation Scholars involved in one or more of these opportunities by their final year. (First cohort due to enter their final year 2014-15).	End 2012/13: 50% involvement End 2013/14: 75% involvement
Funded internships and work placements for WP groups	>30% of First Generation Scholars involved in one or more of these opportunities by their final year.	End 2015/16: 20% of First Generation Scholars to be involved.

6. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Our Performance Committee, which reports directly to University Council, has governance oversight of our performance against the commitments of this Access Agreement. Management oversight is led by our Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching & Learning) and the Director of Student Services. There is parallel reporting to relevant internal bodies with remits for Equalities and Teaching and Learning.

The University recognises the importance of a framework to evaluate activity and has developed an evaluation strategy involving key personnel in the Widening Participation team and also academics involved in delivering activities. This informs the development of our activity and our financial commitments detailed in this Access Agreement.

(a) Monitoring progress against recruitment/student mix targets: indicators we use include:

- admissions data (applications from target schools, and selection patterns, 'decliners' surveys);
- measures of activity in schools/colleges and surrogate 'trajectory' measures, including school results (especially ratios of students achieving GCSE A*-C including English and Maths⁴);
- qualitative work on the effectiveness of interventions with 11-16 and post-16 groups.

(b) Monitoring progression and outcomes: we regularly and consistently monitor the progress/performance of disadvantaged (and equalities) groups in relation to: retention data, annual grade performance of cohorts, degree outcomes and employability DLHE figures. We also receive qualitative work on the effectiveness of First-Generation Scholars offerings and interventions.

⁴ This is a strong indicator of subsequent progression-rates to HE.

7. Provision of information to prospective students

We are committed to providing prospective students with clear, accessible and timely information relating to our fees and support schemes, including the cost of tuition. This information will be communicated through:

- Website and web-prospectus;
- Direct communications with both current applicants, entrants and enquirers;
- Information available at our Open Days;
- Other direct/tailored communications to widening participation groups via our First-Generation Scholars programme;
- A schedule of age appropriate communications;
- A First-Generation Scholars Scheme passport;
- Wall planners for Schools and other partners.

8. Consulting with students

Consultation has primarily been through the student representation on the OFFA Steering Group which has two Students' Union representatives. The OFFA Steering Group, which meets at least three times per academic year, monitors progress against targets and is involved in the development of the Access Agreement.

The University will use the results of the National NSP Survey in June 2014 to inform its own consultation process with students which will inform future developments. The OFFA Steering group also uses feedback from our Widening Participation team, Open Days and Decliners surveys to inform further developments.

A School and Colleges stakeholder group with Head Teachers and students across the age groups has been formed to help develop our programmes and to ensure we are meeting the needs of both partner schools and pupils. Age appropriate focus groups have also been initiated to further inform programme development.

9. Equality and diversity

The University is committed to embedding its responsibilities under the Single Equalities duty into all we do. We value the diversity of our student and staff community, and our vision at our inception, which holds true today, is that 'expanding opportunity in higher education, creating and sharing knowledge at the cutting edge of disciplines, breaking down social and academic barriers and applying knowledge to the real world issues, is the way in which our country and wider society grow'.

We believe that our First-Generation Scholars scheme reflects this vision and demonstrates our commitment to providing equality of opportunity, and that our Widening Participation activities ensure that we will continue to attract and support talented students, irrespective of their personal or financial background.

We continue to review our internal distribution of full-time undergraduates by protected equalities group, in a way that enables us to identify notable equalities groupings, either by subject area or by preference for shorter or longer degree courses.

The University remains committed to increasing the percentage of BME students from 12% to 15% by 2016. This has shaped the design of our outreach programme which builds on a long tradition of working with Schools and Colleges in London with the aim of engaging students from BME backgrounds. One of the key factors used to identify partner schools and colleges in London is the number of pupils who do not have English as a first language. The residential summer schools are our most intensive outreach activity and we continue to develop these. We are also extending our work with Primary Schools through a potential Partnership with IntoUniversity.