Plumpton College

Access Agreement 2018 - 2019

Contents

1. Background

Plumpton College is a specialist land-based college which offers both Further and Higher Education. Since Sept 2012 HE courses have been funded via a direct agreement with HEFCE with validation through the University of Brighton. All courses; Foundation Diplomas, Foundation Degrees (Arts and Science) and BA/BSc/MSc degrees are delivered at Plumpton College and all provision is within the land-based specialist footprint, with 60% within Band B. The specialist nature of provision means that students attending the College originate from all over the UK.

The College is proud of its HE provision which completes and enhances a learning continuum starting with courses for primary and secondary school children, through 16-18 full time courses and adult courses at full levels 2 and 3 and leads from HE onto significant full cost technical updating for employees and employers. This learning continuum is a central characteristic of the College's significant track record in widening participation, especially at HE. Progression from Plumpton College vocational FE courses to Foundation Degrees is historically as high as 25% for some courses; this non-traditional route has enabled students from low participation schools and neighbourhoods to access our Higher Education provision supported considerably by the additional mentoring and support available. Students from all educational backgrounds and establishments are equally represented, supported and encouraged to ensure inclusion, progress and achievement despite specific barriers such as disability, leaving care and ethnicity.

The College monitors closely the data surrounding the ethnic background of its students, and although the intake for both Further Education and Higher Education courses at least reflects the diversity of its locality and the nature of its provision, it has considerably extended its marketing and outreach activities to include a wider pool of students. Historically due to the rural nature of the industry as well as the location of land based colleges, the sector has tended to attract a low proportion of BME students. However the College recruiting activities now include areas of London and this focus is beginning to increase the ethnic diversity of students. The College is now working closely with the National Collaborative Outreach Programme to support the widening participation activities across underrepresented wards in the locality.

2. Fees Strategy for 2017-18

In considering the fee level for full time undergraduate (FdSc, FdA, BA and BSc) courses for 2018-2019, the College has taken into consideration:

- its own funding position and the costs of delivery for its full range of courses
- the planned changes by the government to the national funding environment
- the level of student demand and competition for these students
- the quality of the student experience

This fee and access agreement sets out our intention to deliver education of the highest possible quality but within a competitive economic environment. We will ensure that courses are accessible to students through a comprehensive range of financial and learning support measures which begins in schools and extends to assisting our graduates into their chosen professional careers.

The direct funding contract has allowed the College to maintain the commitment made originally by our partner HEI (University of Brighton) to offer a significant number of innovative foundation and degree courses. Additionally, since 2012 we have developed and introduced new courses in line with market opportunities. This innovation has been placed at significant risk through government reduction of funding to FECs &HEIs.

Students will not, for the duration of their course, be subject to any increase in the fee beyond the RPI figure as Calculated by HEFCE and notified to them before they commit themselves to a course at Plumpton College.

2.1 FEES AND FEE INCOME ABOVE £6,000

For new UK & EU students starting programmes in 2018/19 we propose to charge the following annual fees:

New Students Starting 2018/19	Full Time	Part Time
All undergraduate provision	£8,000	Module Cost Pro Rata

For existing UK & EU students we will retain our previous fee structure without inflationary increase

Returning students 2017/18	Full Time	Part Time
All undergraduate provision	£8,000	Module Cost Pro Rata

Previous cohorts	Full Time	Part Time
Wine related undergraduate	£8,000	Module Cost Pro Rata
Outdoor Education undergraduate (fee inclusive of study trip costs, previously £600 pa)	£7,500	Module Cost Pro Rata
All other undergraduate provision	£6,900	Module Cost Pro Rata

2.2 PROJECTED INCOME FROM FEES OVER £6,000
The projected income for 2018/19 for fees over £6,000 is £581,140

We estimate our average full time fees, based on the numbers of full time student places at each of the levels above to be £7,750 in 2018-2019 up from £7,250 in 2016-2017 and before any fee waivers.

2.3 FEES BELOW £6,000

We currently propose to charge the following fees:

♦ Post-graduation/Masters Degree Viticulture & Oenology - £5,950

However, the course is currently part of a curriculum review process and the fees may change as a result of this.

Part time students will be charged a fee based on the full time cost of the programme that applied in the year of their registration. This is pro-rated in line with the intensity of study and increased by any permitted inflationary rises. No one will pay more than £6,750.

Students on the Veterinary Nursing Programme will be charged £750 on their placement year.

Students studying an Erasmus year will be charged 15% of their annual full time fee.

2.4 PART TIME FEES

All part time fees are a proportion of the full time fee charged for the year that study commences. Full time students normally study 120 credits pa annual and modules are valued at 10 credits or 20 credits each. Therefore a part time student studying 60 credits in a year (i.e. 50% of the full time equivalent) will pay 50% of the full time fee for that year.

3. Strategic Priorities for 2018-19

3.1 STUDENT LIFECYCLE

Access

The College has a long standing and well-evidenced commitment to widening participation and fair access. For example, over 60% of our HE students enter through 'non-traditional' routes.

We intend to sustain our performance of widening participation, especially for career changing individuals moving from established but now unsuitable jobs, to more challenging and rewarding jobs in the rural environment and economy (food production, leisure and tourism, countryside management) and through active collaboration with the NCOP increase our work to raise awareness and increase participation amongst school leavers in wards currently underrepresented in Higher Education.

We will continue to resource the College's wide ranging outreach programme to develop and diversify across the following activities, this will include staff presentations, promotions, preparatory interviews, presentations at schools; awareness raising of land based HE for school teachers and careers teachers (visits to the college). Activity work is aimed at increasing awareness and ambition by:

- ♦ **School Visits** – extending further direct partnerships with the local rural communities and local schools
- ♦ **Curriculum themed support for selective courses** – active interview sessions for students guidance and support for particular vocational courses
- ♦ **Progression activity** – aimed at our existing FE Students supporting them and raising ambition through use of experience sessions, 'Challenge Week' activities and recruiting current students for mentoring
- ♦ **Progressions activity** – aimed at external students in NCOP wards including targeted support, awareness and aspiration raising with parents and full engagement with the NCOP programme of activities
- ♦ **Work with care leavers** – networking with Social Workers directly, offering financial and support measures with our existing FE students
- ♦ **IAG** – our information, advice and guidance is presented with WP in mind and gives an emphasis on the College's longstanding Learner Support Team

The College will be investing further in its existing outreach activities which now work with pupils from primary school through to school leavers.
We plan to increase the intensity of the work we already do in key areas of low participation, especially in the rural areas of the South East, through full engagement with the NCOP programme and also through mentoring and student ambassador schemes, which have been proved to be mutually beneficial to both the mentor and mentee.

Plumpton College has recently undertaken a review of school liaison activity. This has led to the formation of a schools liaison team to provide a coordinated approach and communications network for the work Plumpton College provide to schools in the South East. The Children's Rural Education Centre, a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) approved centre, is now a school liaison team resource. Traditionally this was used as a centre of education for primary schools linked with the farm. This year we have started offering programmes based at the centre for secondary schools including STEM workshops. These exciting applied practical workshops are designed specifically for secondary schools and are focused on the development of individual students. Linked to the curriculum and STEM subjects for KS3 and KS4, students get to take part in engaging and inspiring activities that generate value-added learning. These are offered completely free of charge to schools. These sessions bring a different angle to the STEM subjects traditionally delivered in the classroom and allows Plumpton College to work with schools to help raise attainment and engagement to enable more students to progress in STEM studies and STEM related careers.

We have been able to expand the breadth of activities offered to schools on and off site and now have a programme consisting of:

- Farm and lambing visits
- Assemblies
- School taster days
- Twilight and CPD sessions for teachers
- College information events
- Careers advice sessions, backed up by lesson plans and resources
- School –based careers events
- School-based parent evenings and careers fairs
- Individual taster day

Plumpton College are currently working with 258 Secondary Schools, Colleges and 6th Forms across the South East. Next year our School Liaison Coordinator will be working with these schools to ensure that they understand the programmes that Plumpton College can offer through our new schools prospectus, and ensure that more groups within schools have access to careers advice in the land-based sector.

Student Success

The College is committed to ensuring that barriers to success are removed as far as possible and with this objective has built up a strong HE Student Support Team. They undertake an assessment of all students and follow up issues with specialist assessors and implement targeted support. Additionally an array of support equipment is available in-house along with trained mentors and a confidential counselling service. The College has accessible buildings and residential accommodation suitable for students with physical disabilities.

In-house support is available to students who are eligible for DSA funding. Our data confirms that the outcomes for students that receive the full range of support are positive with retention and achievement rates exceeding those of student who do not receive this support.

College activities:

- **Targeting financial support** – to where it is most need
- **Provision of financial advice** – in particular for those students new to HE where little advice and guidance is available within their family network
- **Working with undergraduates –** supporting and raising ambition through use of current students for mentoring and ambassadorship activity
- **Academic support** – every student is assigned a personal tutor with regular contact time and all students can access additional support from the HE student support officer and their team.
- **Mental Wellbeing** – the College is committed to supporting students with mental health difficulties. We are developing strategies to deliver this support for what is an ever growing issue amongst the student population

The College reviews feedback from students (via the National Student Survey and internal mechanisms) to develop future strategy.

Progression

The College has a network of local employers aligned to land based industries which has built up over years of delivering training and outreach work. All students are supported in the ambition to progress to employment or further studies. College activities include:

- **Career development** – students are supported by curriculum teams with extensive industry experience and all provision includes work related experience and an element of work placement
- **Business awareness** – all undergraduate students will study business management and entrepreneurship in their core curriculum
- **Graduate Skills** – support is provided for IT skills, presentation skills, writing and self-organisation through the Graduate Skills Development Programme, open to all HE students
- **Postgraduate Study** – as well as developing our own provision, we will seek to raise aspirations and support students with IAG on progression to further study

3.2 PART TIME & MATURE STUDENTS

The College attracts a high proportion of mature students, many of which study on a part time basis. The main factors impacting on their mode of study are family commitments and availability of funding. We will continue to focus on the needs of this group, develop strategies for improving our recruitment and develop opportunities for flexible study. The introduction of maintenance loans for part time students has impacted on this to some extent with fewer students citing finances as a reason for withdrawal.

3.3 STUDENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The College will award Bursaries in each year of study for both full time and part time students who fall within the following five priority groups;

The scheme will be open to all Higher Education students who fulfil the financial criteria.

The fund will have a value of £50,000 although this may be amended in the light of actual numbers of students enrolling. Recent experience has seen students prefer maintenance type support rather than fee waivers and this has a direct impact on retention. Accordingly bursary support will be delivered broadly in line with student choice.

The College has an annual a hardship fund of £5,000 to support students who fall into severe financial difficulties and without help would not be able to continue their course of study.

4. Expenditure on Access and Student Success

To support our strategic objectives, we propose to allocate approx. 30% of our additional fee income above £6,000 on measures to support access, success and retention.

On the basis of retention and success data there is a particular focus and increase on previous years in allocation for success and progression, this comprises:

Access Activities	£20,000
Student success	£85,000
Progression	£85,000
Bursary Support	£50,000
Hardship Fund	£5,000
Total	**£190,000**

While allocating budgets within the overall expenditure plan of £190,000 we have used our evaluation of internal data on student retention and outcomes in the Academic Years 2014-15 and 2015-16, as well as research papers published by HEFCE and others. The result is that we have prioritised spend away from student bursaries, due to the low numbers of students citing financial difficulty as a reason for withdrawal, and towards spend on student success and progression. In particular, this comprises additional funding for the Student Support Team element, with a focus on providing additional support in science delivery alongside the traditional study skills support students receive from this service, funding of additional qualifications within the students main aim and providing tablets for all students.

5. Consultation with students

We discussed the effectiveness of the mechanisms for student support with student representatives at Course Board meetings (two per year), in the internal student surveys (two per year) and in the Principal's Forum. Students were also consulted on their preferred use for additional fee income in a separate survey.

6. Equality & Diversity

The College values diversity and all individuals for their contribution to College life irrespective of personal differences. We are committed to advancing equality of opportunity and avoiding discrimination in all of its activities.

The College has an Equality & Diversity policy which the access agreement is compliant with. We aim to take all reasonable steps, and make all reasonable adjustments, to ensure that access to College provision is compliant with, and within the spirit of, the Equality Act.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Vice Principal (Academic and Quality) and the Director of Finance are responsible for the delivery of this agreement and the College is committed to monitor compliance and progress against the milestones.

Monitoring of the effectiveness of Student Lifecycle activities will be undertaken by:

- ♦ Gather feedback from current students and academic staff.
- ♦ Use DLHE and NSS data.
- ♦ Analysis of internal retention and achievement data through quality review and academic health monitoring processes
- ♦ Full engagement with the monitoring and evaluation of the NCOP programme.

The major targets/milestones relate to data collection and analysis and therefore monitoring will examine existing data streams (effectively our current benchmark) and track the improvements made.

8. Targets and Milestones

The College will undertake the following activities in support of our aspirational targets;

1. To promote the benefits and opportunities of higher education entry to our target groups through Outreach events
2. Hold internal events to raise aspirations in our existing Further Education students where progression to HE has been historically low
3. Continue to improve the proportion of disadvantaged students (as defined by our priority groups) participating in our HE courses
4. Targeting of bursary support towards the most vulnerable students
5. Provision of support to achieve an increase in the success of students within the mature student group

We have set out detailed targets to OFFA (Office For Fair Access) and these are attached as an appendix. The College monitors progress against the annual milestones.

9. Provision of information to students and prospective students

Information for students on the fees and financial support available will be detailed in the College prospectus and on the College website. Illustrations of the net costs of studying on their courses will be provided, including estimates on the cost of living for students living on and off campus. The prospectus will also advise prospective students of the targeted support that will be given to them to study on HE courses and achieve their qualifications.

Plumpton College provides a high level of academic and pastoral support to students. Admissions, Tutors and the Marketing Team will provide information regarding the fee level and financial support available at Careers Events and Information mornings. This will be in addition to numerous promotion events at schools, careers events and shows and fairs.

The strength of the support for student IAG is evidenced by our award and continuing accreditation by Matrix. The College will publish clear, accessible and timely information for applicants and students on the fees that we charge and the financial support we offer. We will do this both through our own institutional information channels, particularly our website, and also through the provision of information to UCAS in order to help them populate their applicant facing web services. Information regarding the fees and the financial support available through the College will be sent to students with their offer of a place.

Table 7 - Targets and milestones

Table 7a - Statistical targets and milestones relating to your applicants, entrants or student body

Reference number	Stage of the lifecycle (drop-down menu)	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target? (drop-down menu)	Baseline year (drop-down menu)	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
T16a_01	Access	State school	**HESA T1b** - State School (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Increase the proportion of students within the whole student body that come from non-traditional backgrounds.	No	2014-15	22%	25%	26%	27%	27.5	28%	
T16a_02	Student success	Disabled	**HESA T7** - Students in receipt of DSA (full-time, first degree entrants)	Improve the number of new students that receive DSA support	No	2016-17	8%	10%	12%	14%	16%	18%	
T16a_03	Access	Ethnicity	**Other statistic** - Ethnicity (please give details in the next column)	Improve the proportion of Non-White students within the total student population	No	2016-17	5%	6%	7%	8%	9%	10%	
T16a_04	Access	Disabled	**Other statistic** - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Improve the proportion of disabled studentss within the total student population	No	2014-15	0.25%	1.00%	1.25%	1.50%	1.75	3%	
T16a_05	Access	Part-time	**Other statistic** - Part-time (please give details in the next column)	Improve the proportion of Part Time Students within the total student population	No	2016-17	25%	26%	27%	28%	29%	30%	
T16a_06	Access	Mature	**Other statistic** - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Improve the proportion of Mature Students within the total student population	No	2016-17	49%	50%	52%	54%	56%	58%	
T16a_07	Access	Care-leavers	**Other statistic** - Care-leavers (please give details in the next column)	Improve the proportion of Care-Leavers within the total student population	No	2014-15	0.50%	1.25%	1.50%	1.75%	2	2.25%	
T16a_08	Student success	Mature	**Other statistic** - Mature (please give details in the next column)	Improve retention/success rate for students over 25 yrs old	No	2014-15	88%	91%	92%	93%	93.5%	95%	

Table 7b - Other milestones and targets.

Reference Number	Select stage of the lifecycle	Main target type (drop-down menu)	Target type (drop-down menu)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
								2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
T16b_01	Multiple	State school	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	A range of activities with state schools in the south east including farm visits, tasters and mentoring	No	2016-17	258 schools	258	258	258	258	258	Numerical value stays the same but increasing engagement for attainment raising

Optional commentary on milestones.
This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.