ACCESS AGREEMENT 2012/13

Introduction

1. This Access Agreement is an important pillar of Reading’s Widening Participation Strategy. The Strategy is aligned with, and designed to support key aims in our Corporate Plan and our ambition to remain a university amongst the world’s top 200 universities and one which attracts students from very diverse backgrounds.

2. The Widening Participation Strategy lays out the following key principles:
   a. Support key players in the national Widening Participation Agenda
   b. Foster a diverse student body
   c. Ensure academic success for all regardless of background
   d. Maximise career potential

   These principles will continue to underpin our access activities, our financial support proposals and strategies for maintaining and improving performance in retention and success.

3. At Reading, we are committed to increasing access to all students who can benefit from the programmes of study we offer. We aim to attract and support a student body which is as diverse as possible given Reading’s particular geographic and social context and the cap that HEFCE has placed on our student recruitment. We believe that a diverse community provides the most fruitful environment for learning in the widest sense and it forms one of the four strands of the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy (2008-13).

4. We work hard to ensure that all students who enrol both complete and are successful in their chosen programmes of study and, upon graduation, gain graduate-level employment or higher level further education and training.

5. At Reading, we believe in treating people as individuals. We use benchmarks for useful comparisons, and by translating the benchmark percentages into actual numbers of students we get a much better picture of the people affected by our plans and activities and their particular needs. We believe that “every student has a story”. Table 1 illustrates the point: a 2.7% difference between the actual enrolment of students from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2 and our benchmark translates to 60 real people, 60 individual stories of hope, endeavour and achievement.

| Enrolments at Reading in 2008/09 of young UK undergraduate and PGCE students from POLAR Quintiles 1 and 2 |
6. Thinking about actual numbers allows those involved in aspiration raising, access, recruitment and admissions, and support and to consider people as individuals. Moreover, individual students may have multiple and overlapping issues; by monitoring results at the individual level we will understand much more about those individuals and how the University can meet their needs. We also believe that many, if not all students, not just those from various disadvantaged backgrounds, can face many challenges and problems and thus we offer support in equal measure to all. We believe this is core to successful outreach. This general approach is expanded in some detail in the Sections “Targeting Disadvantaged Students” (Paragraphs 23 to 38) and “Setting and Achieving Realistic Milestones and Targets” (Paragraphs 39 to 42).

7. We are committed to providing a balanced portfolio of outreach measures, student financial packages, support for student retention and success to deliver impact in widening access. It is a pervasive, embedded model that can be articulated through ongoing student support as well as through outreach and recruitment.

8. Our Access Agreement forms part of a phased approach to widening access to the University of Reading – we have a range of activities and proposals planned, but not all can be delivered in Year One (2012-13). We have listed and provided costs for those that will form the focus of our activities in the first year which will be expanded in subsequent years under future Access Agreements. Our intention in this first iteration is to show that Reading is taking very seriously this area of our business and social responsibility.

9. In the first year targeted outreach activities identify specific audiences as stated in Widening Participation Activities (Paragraphs 43 to 70), and a suite of financial support packages, based on our experience and understanding of what has been successful in the past (Financial Support for Students (Paragraphs 14 to 22). In subsequent years we will focus on retention and strategic partnerships to achieve both our institutional targets and milestones and to benefit the sector more widely. We will also develop more targeted financial support and retention measures. Our intention is that the balance of investment in each of these areas will shift in the direction of outreach and student retention and success, and away from financial support for students. This will require a longitudinal approach to relationship-building and strategic planning.

### Financial and Other Assumptions in this Access Agreement

10. The financial and other assumptions of external factors which affect this Access Agreement include the following:
University of Reading: Access Agreement 2012/13.

a. that there will be no significant change in the arrangements that BIS/HEFCE has announced for 2012/13
b. students eligible under this agreement are those undergraduates who are full-time and domiciled in the UK or in the EU

c. the cap on student intake in 2012/13 will be at our 2008/09 level =2650

d. the tuition fees for UK/EU undergraduate students who entered before 2012/13 will be £3465 in the academic year 2012/13 and will be assumed to rise by CPI in succeeding academic years

e. additional income from HEFCE for the National Scholarship Programme will be £330,000 in 2012/13; £660,000 in 2013/14 and £990,000 in 2014/15 as proposed in a recent HEFCE circular1 (Circular 13/2011: 23 March 2011)

f. that OFFA will take into account spend on any outreach measures in 2011/12 that enable outreach activity to reach planned levels in 2012/13 in the expenditure under this 2012/13 access agreement (e.g. Aimhigher/Progress South Central legacy 2).

11. Given that the above assumptions are valid then the following structure will apply to Reading’s financial approach to this Access Agreement which we understand to be a transitional agreement for one year only:

a. that £780 of each tuition fee of £9,000 (being 26.0 % of the tuition fee net of £6,0003) will be used to establish an Access Fund and we expect to spend the same proportion of the tuition fee on the Access Fund if the Government allows an increase in real terms in the permitted tuition in 2013-14.

b. the estimated total Access Fund in 2012/13 will be in excess of £5.90 million which is greater than the Access Fund under any of our previous Access Agreements with OFFA and comprises:
   i. the contributions from the tuition fees paid by all eligible students who entered before 2012/13 and who are still enrolled in 2012/13;
   ii. the contributions from tuition fees from students who enrol under the new fee regime in 2012/13;

c. we will spend a minimum of 11% of the Access Fund (actual in 2012/13 =11.2%) on outreach activity in 2012/13 the details of which are described below and aim to raise that proportion progressively to 15% over the years 2013-14 to 2015-16 when almost all eligible students will be paying the new fees;

   d. in relation to financial support for students, in the first year of the National Scholarship Programme, Reading will not only match the support of £330,000 provided by HEFCE as it is required to do but will contribute more than five-fold that amount to the scheme, but the proportion will reduce as HEFCE provides increased contributions in 2013/14 and 2014/154. Taking into account the fee waivers provided in this Access Agreement the average tuition fee for 2012/13 will be in the order of £8300.

**Tuition Fees for UK/EU Undergraduates**

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1 HEFCE Circular 13/2011: 23 March 2011
3 This matches our % spend on variable fees in our approved 2010/11 Access Agreement.
4 At the time of writing this draft Access Agreement we were not in receipt of the further guidance on the National Scholarship Programme that BIS/HEFCE had promised to publish in April.
12. The University will charge the maximum permitted level of tuition fees for all full time UK/EU undergraduate students as shown in Table 2. Moreover, the University expects to fully apply real terms rises in the tuition fee permitted in future years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of entering the University</th>
<th>Full-time tuition Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 2012/13</td>
<td>£3465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>The maximum permitted level (£9,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Tuition fees for part-time UK/EU students will be charged pro rata.

Financial Support for students who entered the University prior to the 2012/13 Academic Year

14. Under its Access Agreements with OFFA, the University is obliged to continue its financial support for all eligible students in the greatest financial need who entered the University before the 2012/13 academic year. The University has adjusted its arrangements annually since variable fees were introduced to better target support to those students with the greatest need. As a result, the financial support we provide is complex and will depend on the year in which students first entered. These arrangements are as follows:

   g. All students who entered in 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11 will qualify for a “standard” bursary of an amount determined by household income as laid out in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Level of the “Standard” Bursary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 to £35,000</td>
<td>£935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£35,001 to £45,000</td>
<td>£470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   h. All students who entered the University in 2006/07 and 2007/08 will qualify for a “standard” bursary of an amount determined by the amount of the state HE maintenance grant as laid out in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of full HE Maintenance Grant received</th>
<th>Level of the “Standard” Bursary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76%–100%</td>
<td>£1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51%–75%</td>
<td>£1,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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5 It is unclear how BIS intends for universities to set tuition fees for part-time students. Clarification is required on the interpretation of the term per annum as applied to the maximum permitted fee. Most universities recognise that there are additional costs associated with part-time students and would want to charge more than a pro rata tuition fee.

6 In 2012/13 the University expects to have a few students who first enrolled in 2006/7 and 2007/8 due to exceptional circumstances. These will be eligible for the “standard” bursaries available at the time they enrolled.
15. All UK students will be eligible for these bursaries; it is not intended to make separate arrangements for Scottish or Welsh students, although this policy will be subject to review under the annual monitoring exercise.

16. The Bursary will be provided in the form of a financial award for maintenance, and will be increased annually in line with any inflationary rises in the fee limit.

17. The University will subscribe to the UUK Model Bursary Scheme which offers an administrative structure for the calculation and distribution of bursaries in cooperation with Department of Education and the Student Loans Company (SLC).

Financial Support for students entering the University in the 2012/13 Academic Year

18. The University is obliged to participate in the National Scholarship Programme (NSP), the details of which were announced by BIS on 15 February 2011. The scheme requires all universities charging tuition fees of £9,000 to UK/EU full-time undergraduate and PGCE students with household incomes of £25,000 or less to provide eligible students with a minimum scholarship of £3,000 p.a. of one year’s benefit of which a maximum of £1,000 can be in the form of a cash payment or bursary. Reading’s scheme goes beyond this minimum requirement by providing an even higher level of financial support to those in the greatest need which we deem to be students whose household income is £16,000 or less. Of 2,470 students who entered in 2009/10, 445 (~18%) fell into this category. The details are given in Table 5.

19. Reading Bursaries from 2012/13. For full time students entering in 2012/13 and progressing into years 2, 3 and 4 we plan to provide a package of fee waivers and cash bursaries under a Reading Scheme. For all eligible students with household incomes of £16,000 or less we will provide a fee waiver of £2,000 and a cash bursary of £500 for each year of study. For all full time English domiciled undergraduate students with household incomes between £16,001 and £25,000 we will provide a fee waiver of £1,500 and a cash bursary of £500. We recognise that students from households where the income is more between £25,001 and £42,000 are still likely to experience financial hardship and hence from 2012/13 we intend to provide a cash bursary of £500 for those students too for each year they study.

Table 5. Financial Support for full-time undergraduate students from England\(^1\) entering in 2012/13 under the National Scholarship Programme and under Reading Bursaries in subsequent years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household income</th>
<th>No. of entrants in 2009/10</th>
<th>National Scholarship (Year 1 entrants)</th>
<th>Reading Bursaries (Years 2,3,4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£0 to 16,000</td>
<td>445 (18%)</td>
<td>Fee Waiver: £3,000, Cash Bursary: £1,000</td>
<td>Fee Waiver: £2,000, Cash Bursary: £500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£16,001 to 25,000</td>
<td>74 (3%)</td>
<td>Fee Waiver: £2,000, Cash Bursary: £1,000</td>
<td>Fee Waiver: £1,500, Cash Bursary: £500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£25,001 to £42,000</td>
<td>138 (5.6%)</td>
<td>0, 0</td>
<td>0, £500(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£42,001 and over</td>
<td>1,813 (73.4%)</td>
<td>0, 0</td>
<td>0, 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Students from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are not eligible for NSP bursaries and fee waivers or for Reading Bursaries\(^7\). Non UK EU students are eligible for Fee Waivers only.

\(^2\) This bursary is also available to full time students in year 1 and in subsequent years of their studies.

\(^7\) http://www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/nsp/faq.htm#q22
20. **Foundation Degree Bursaries: Early Years Learning Foundation Degrees with partner FE/HE Colleges.** From our first Access Agreement onwards Reading has provided fee waivers or financial support for students on Foundation Degrees. With the increased fees, we are concerned that enrolments may collapse in one of our most successful Foundation Degree in Early Years Learning that we offer at three members of our Associate College Network (Berkshire College of Agriculture, Bracknell and Wokingham College, and Newbury College). These degree programmes are important for the following reasons: of the 90 to 100 student across both years on these programmes in 2008 to 2010, ~90% were mature students and 95% of those were female and many have families. They are employed in nurseries and their employers provide day release and in some cases pay full or part tuition fees. When qualified the students are able to impact positively on the lives of nursery-age children many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. We can think of no other scheme where the impacts of a fee waiver could have a greater impact upon the lives of the 45 or so students who graduate every year and the infants they work with. Therefore we intend to provide a fee waiver of 50% for all students entering from 2012/13 and for both years of the programme. Therefore in 2012/13 each student will receive a maximum fee waiver of £4,500.

21. **Pre-Entry Travel Bursaries for students from areas of low participation in HE.** The University will be offering Pre–Entry Bursaries to provide support for applicants from areas of low participation (POLAR 2 quintiles 1 and 2). Variable amounts up to £300 will be made available to cover travel and other costs associated with attendance at UCAS Applicant Visit Days and admissions interviews at Reading, and to provide individual or group mentoring support from current undergraduates during the application process. It is anticipated that some 200 students a year will take advantage of this scheme. Greater than 40% of all students who have received such a travel bursary have enrolled at Reading since it was introduced in our first Access Agreement (2006/07).

22. **Pre-entry Travel Bursaries for students with disabilities.** The University will be offering Pre-Application and Pre-Entry Bursaries for Disabled Students to provide additional support for disabled applicants so that they may visit the University prior to applying or accepting an offer to ensure their support needs can be fully met and that they are able to prepare for transition to HE. Variable amounts up to £500 will be made available to cover travel and other costs for the applicant and, where appropriate, a carer to visit the University and to provide additional specialist support during the application process as necessary. It is anticipated that 10-15 bursaries will be taken up each year, with some students being able to benefit from more than one visit if appropriate. Greater than 50% of all students who have received such a travel bursary have enrolled at Reading since it was introduced in our first Access Agreement (2006/7).

**Targeting Disadvantaged Students**

23. Although we intend to focus on individuals and groups of individuals in the context of our work, we will place that approach in the wider national context by using HESA’s national benchmarks. Although the location-adjusted benchmarks tend to show Reading’s relative position in a more favourable light we choose to use the non-adjusted benchmarks for the following two reasons:

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8 Important note: students on this scheme are not eligible for an NSP or Reading Bursaries
a. in every case, the national benchmarks provide a more stretching set of aspirations for Reading compared to our location-adjusted benchmark figures, and believe that this is the right time to strive towards higher targets;

b. while the national picture continues to be very unclear as we prepare for 2012 entry and its ramifications, a backdrop of what is happening across the sector is to us a more meaningful benchmark than a local and possibly isolated position. However, we intend to monitor our position against location-adjusted benchmarks as helpful and interesting contextual data, and pay particular attention to these especially where these might indicate the need for specific interventions (e.g. where the location adjusted benchmark is lower than the national benchmark).

24. Our consideration of the outreach and access measures we plan to develop have been informed by three considerations:

i. the national picture and the various reports on what has and has not been successful and especially relative to a campus-based, non–metropolitan HEIs such as Reading e.g. Sir Martin Harris’s report to BIS on What More Can be Done To Widen Access;

j. the regional work of Aimhigher Berkshire and the Lifelong Learning Network, Progress South Central, for which Reading has been the lead HEI and;

k. our own internal institutional work on outreach and access apart from our work as the lead HEI both for Aimhigher Berkshire and Progress South Central.

25. Reading’s performance in widening participation as compared to other English universities over the last four years is shown in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Actual (%)</th>
<th>Benchmark (%)</th>
<th>English HEI Rank (%)</th>
<th>Actual (%)</th>
<th>Benchmark (%)</th>
<th>English HEI Rank (%)</th>
<th>Actual (%)</th>
<th>Benchmark (%)</th>
<th>English HEI Rank (%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/8</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Percentage of young entrants in each category
2HESA Benchmark for % of entrants from each category
3Reading relative position amongst other English HEIs where the institution with the highest benchmark corresponds to 100%

We have looked at three indicators in HESA’s widening participation statistics which are derived from HESA’s Tables T1a and T1b. These are: % of young entrants from state schools; % of entrants from NS-SEC classes 4,5,6, and 7; and % of entrants from low participation neighbourhoods. Reading’s performance across all categories and all four years is remarkably consistent. Reading’s ranking against other English HEI’s lies between 26.2 and 29.9 percentile position with a mean of 27.5 (all three categories, all four years). However in real terms, Reading is consistently close to its benchmarks for its proportion of state school students (mean of 96.4% across the 4 years) and those from the lower 4 classes of NS-SEC (mean of 86% across the 4 years) though somewhat more adrift
of its benchmarks in respect of entrants from the lowest participation neighbourhoods (mean of 74% across the 4 years). This analysis shows that Reading needs to focus particular attention on attracting students from low participation neighbourhoods the vast majority of whom will be from the state school sector.

26. To refine our approach to outreach and access measures we carried out an analysis of Reading-specific data including categories of students not discussed in the previous paragraph. The analysis is summarised in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 (next page) shows the numbers of UK/EU full time undergraduate students in various categories who started at Reading over a five year period. It also shows HESA benchmarks statistics.
Figure 1: Numbers and UK/EU full-time undergraduate Students enrolled by year in various categories at Reading and institutional benchmarks.
The vertical axis shows actual additional numbers of UK/EU FT undergraduate students in each category that would have been needed to be recruited to reach the benchmark in that year.

**Figure 2: Distance to target HESA benchmarks for each year's enrolment.**

**Categories of students we are considering for outreach and access work**

27. *Young Full-Time First Degree Entrants from areas of low participation in HE*. Our own work on tracking the POLAR 2 statistics, and especially considering the work done by Aimhigher Berkshire suggests this is a particularly difficult variable to influence. Figure 2. reveals that over the years 2005/06 to 2009/10, Reading appears to be slipping back slightly in the numbers of students that it recruits from regions of low participation in HE. Further analysis indicates that the numbers of students we actually recruited in this category remained relatively steady and between 153 and 172. However it is the benchmark data which have consistently increased largely due to increased intakes of this category of students in other institutions. We also suspect that the University’s Corporate Plan target of increasing entry standards militates against applications from some of these students. That idea is supported by tracking data from Aimhigher Berkshire for whom Reading is the lead HEI. The data provided by the Aimhigher South East Tracking Consortium (MORE), based at Aimhigher Kent & Medway show that relatively few students enrol at Reading although many of the activities that the pupils participate in involve many interactions with University of Reading such as Easter/Summer schools, visit days to the campus and mentoring by Reading students. The MORE tracking data show that in the years 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09, Aimhigher Berkshire worked with 2,875 pupils of whom a very encouraging 1,335 (46%) entered HE. However, of those only 54 (4%) came to Reading. There was a broad range of receiving institutions with the greatest numbers of students entering Thames Valley University (13%) and Buckinghamshire New University (6%). Our experience so far suggests that the model of outreach hitherto carried out by Aimhigher Berkshire and in our own independent work is very successful in encouraging students to apply to and gain entry to a very wide range of universities. However increasing entry to Reading from amongst this group of disadvantaged students may need more focussed approaches and longer term engagements. This accords with many reports of the impacts of various outreach activities from HEFCE, Action on Access, OFFA and the
HEA. We welcome undertakings to credit institutions with any work they do that encourages students from disadvantaged students to go to university wherever that happens to be.

28. We are clear from all our work in this area, and the considerable experience of others that we have to adopt a much more selective approach, working in partnership with Schools and FE colleges to target the “most able but least likely” students from year 10 onwards, to engage them in long-term and focussed relationships with the University culminating in making them differential admissions offers if need be. We have two schemes in mind. The first is a new scheme that provisionally we have called ASPIRE and we expect to start working with Schools on this starting in AY 2011/12 drawing down on some of the work of Aimhigher Berkshire and working especially with Schools with whom our Institute of Education has established long-term relationships in relation to ITT and PGCE work and research. We would expect contextual data on individual students to be more effective after a period of time has elapsed in building relationships with schools and students; we believe that these data are at their best when they are based on the individual, and not general percentages of ‘student types’. This is one of the broader variables that we expect to work with in affecting student behaviours sector-wide.

29. In 2012/13 we will initiate the scheme by asking partner schools to work with us to identify 25 year 10 and 25 year 12 of their “most able but least likely” pupils to join the scheme. In 2013/14 we will recruit a similar new cohort so that after two years of the scheme we will have 100 pupils on the scheme, a quarter of whom will be considering applying to university in the year 13 group. We will maintain this level of activity and monitor the outcomes before building greater capacity. When the scheme is up and running we would expect that more than half of the pupils in any year 13 group will be applying to some of the most selective universities and we would hope that half of those will consider coming to Reading. Though the numbers are small we will see an uplift in the numbers of students that we recruit from disadvantaged backgrounds.

30. In later paragraphs we describe the key measure that we expect to pursue in keeping track of the destinations of those students who do not choose Reading, in order that we can monitor the wider success of our work, as well as some specific outreach work in schools, coupled with longitudinal work with individuals.

31. Mature /Full-Time First Degree undergraduate entrants. In the last five years the proportion of mature full time UK/EU students who started at Reading has varied quite significantly and we see large year to year fluctuations e.g. 185 enrolled in 2007/08 but 344 enrolled just one year later. It is not clear what factors influence these significant swings in enrolment but one suspects economic factors may be important given the financial crisis in 2008. There is a case for the University providing more information and guidance about the programmes it offers to mature applicants especially at a time when unemployment is likely to rise. There is no subject area in which mature students are especially under-represented and which might require targeted outreach work to increase applications and enrolments but we suspect that our vocational and professional programmes (e.g. teaching, law) may be of particular interest. However, we have recognised that higher tuition fees will probably impact on enrolments on our Foundation Degree in Early Years Learning (FdEd-EYL) delivered in collaboration with three members of Reading’s Associate College Network (Berkshire College of Agriculture, Bracknell and Wokingham College, and Newbury College). Therefore we are providing significant fee waivers for these students (see Paragraph 20) and we will track recruitment with the help of the three partner colleges.
32. **Young Full-Time First Degree Entrants (notably percentages from state schools).** Figure 2 indicates that over the last 5 years Reading has enrolled increasingly more students from independent schools against its HESA benchmarks. However, there is a considerable spread across the 5 years 2005/06 to 2009/10 with a range being 429 to 480, but the last year (2008/09) being the lowest of those numbers. Figure 1, shows that the HESA benchmark for Reading’s recruitment of students from state schools over that period. Nevertheless at its maximum, the distance from the benchmark (2008/09) represents only 40 individuals. Again, it may be that the Corporate Plan Target with respect to increasing our admissions standards may be having a slow negative effect (See Fig. 2). As was indicated in Paragraph 25, over the last 4 years, we have achieved an average of 96.4% of our benchmark for recruitment of state school students. We will monitor and set targets for this measure but it will not be a top level target for our access and outreach work. However, we expect that our work in targeting other criteria will naturally cover underperforming state schools.

33. **Students in receipt of the Disabled Students’ Allowance, and registered with other disabilities.** We have consistently exceeded our benchmark targets for students in receipt of DSA, but our own internal monitoring also indicates that representation of disabled students within the University (through our own diagnostic testing which includes learning-specific disabilities) remains high.

34. Although we will continue to use the DSA as a benchmark, we will use use our own internal systems to monitor the numbers of individuals with disabilities who are recruited. We will continue to identify students who come to the University who have not previously been diagnosed with a disability, particularly amongst those with disabilities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and Asperger’s syndrome. In fact almost double the number of students at Reading have a disability (especially a learning difficulty) as are on disability support. We also know that students with particular learning difficulties tend to enrol in particular programmes (e.g. individuals with Asperger’s syndrome tend to cluster in the mathematics and systems engineering subject areas) and so represent particular requirements for monitoring attendance, timekeeping, the timely submission of work and study advice. These considerations will underpin our planning for devising resources and processes that support these students in their retention and success. Our Financial Support for Students section notes some targeted funds in the pre-entry stage which enables students with disabilities (declared in advance of enrolment) to attend Open Days and Visit Days at the University (see paragraph 22).

35. **Ethnicity.** We have looked carefully at this variable. It is clear from the variations in our data and the benchmarks that this is a difficult area in which to work and to yield meaningful impact. We will include ethnicity as a factor in gathering contextual data as part of our programme for working with schools, and our partnership work with other institutions will no doubt affect this, but it has not been selected as a leading variable. However, we have noted a significantly lower level of successful degree outcomes amongst non-white individuals. Whereas the average proportion of UK undergraduate students who obtain First or Upper Second Class degrees, is 73%, the proportion amongst non-white students is only 57% and that is also coupled to a higher propensity for the group not to complete their programmes of study. (See later on in Success).

36. **Care Leavers.** Reading is aware that it has a low number of students who are care leavers. It fluctuates from year to year but across the present population we know of ~30 students. This is probably an underestimate because the provision of this information is not obligatory and is in any case highly sensitive. We will expect to gather and use this information in our activities aimed at
targeting students who are especially disadvantaged by their backgrounds recognising that the provision of this information is purely on a voluntary basis. However, we recognise the important work done by the Frank Buttle Trust in this area and so in 2011/12 we will be working towards and hope to obtain the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark informed by the Practice Guide issued jointly by the Trust and Action on Access\(^9\).

37. **Students from backgrounds in receipt of free school meals (FSM).** Across the years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 Reading had 115 students who declared that they had been in receipt of free school meals. This corresponds to 1.7% of its students and the recommendation in the report of The Sutton Trust is that this should be the group to benefit most from the National Scholarship Programme\(^10\). In the league table published in that report, Reading was placed as the institution with the 14\(^{th}\) lowest level of entrants with free school meals. Before the report highlighted this group of students, this was not an area that Reading had tracked but we intend to do so in the future where the information is available. We will expect to gather and use this information in our activities aimed at targeting students who are especially disadvantaged. However, we have made especial provision for financial support for students on the lowest household incomes (<£16,000 p.a.) and we expect that this support will reach many if not all students who had been in receipt of free schools meals.

38. **Parental Education.** From the research and evidence widely available, we recognise the importance of this variable as a proxy for likely behaviours of young people in the future, and their attitudes to Higher Education. It formed the statistical basis for Sir Martin Harris’s advice to BIS on what more could be done to widen access. However at this time it is not the most robust or reliable descriptor by which we can identify appropriate student groups as only 38% of Reading students return any information about this. Most students (55%) do not appear to know anything about their parents’ education. Nevertheless, we expect to use this information in selecting students to work with in our highly targeted aspiration raising activities such as the ASPIRE and Reading Science Scholars.

**Setting and Achieving Realistic Milestones and Targets**

39. In setting and achieving realistic milestones and targets for measuring the impacts of our outreach work for 2012/13 we have considered a number of factors. The first three relate to the national context and the fourth reflects the local context.

- **a.** In our view, the significant increases in fees in the HE sector will have significant negative impacts on the participation in HE from disadvantaged groups especially those from low participation areas and from low household income backgrounds.
- **b.** The little market research that has been done on the impact of higher fees\(^11\) suggests that there will be a “flight to quality”: the competition for the best universities will intensify.
- **c.** National outreach and aspiration raising projects such as Aimhigher and the Life-Long Learning Networks will not exist after the summer 2011.
- **d.** Analysis of the work done by Aimhigher Berkshire clearly shows that targeted outreach work has been effective in raising participation levels in Berkshire but it has not benefited Reading in particular.

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\(^10\) The Sutton Trust; Report entitled *Responding to the new landscape for university access*. December 2010.

40. These considerations suggest that we need to be very cautious and realistic in setting milestones and targets. A brief summary of the impact of the work done by Aimhigher Berkshire (a single county project) which was tracked by the MORE project (see Paragraph 26) over the years 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 is very revealing.

   a. Over the three year period Aimhigher Berkshire received ~£1.45 million in funding (ave. £0.48 million p.a.).
   b. Over the period, Aimhigher Berkshire ran typical outreach and aspiration raising activities which targeted ~ 2,875 pupils from 18 of the poorest performing schools in Berkshire. The activities included visits to schools, visit days and master classes on the Reading campus, Easter and Summer schools on the Reading campus, mentoring from Reading and Thames Valley undergraduates, and various information, advice and guidance sessions.
   c. 46% of all the students that Aimhigher Berkshire worked with in those three years entered an HEI and moreover there is clear evidence of increasing success over those three years being respectively: 260, 360, and 434.
   d. Of those students who entered HEIs in the years in question, the proportion entering research intensive universities\(^\text{12}\) increased significantly from 21.7% in 2006/07; through 31.4% in 2007/08; to 37.5% in 2008/09.
   e. Of all the receiving research intensive institutions, Reading was the most popular, but nevertheless, of the 371 students who entered research intensive universities only 54 (~1 in 7) came to Reading despite their considerable exposure to the Reading campus and Reading staff and students.
   f. Reading’s share of the students who have entered the research intensive universities fell over the three years from 17.8% (1 in 5.6) in 2006/07, to 16.8% (1 in 5.9) in 2007/08; and to just 6.7% (1 in 14.9) in 2008/09.

41. Therefore the results of all Aimhigher Berkshire’s work, very successful though it has been, indicates that an expenditure of £0.48 million p.a. most of which was focussed on activities associated with Reading yielded only ~18 Reading entrants p.a. (who may have chosen Reading anyway) and there is evidence that an increasing number who achieve the entrance standards for the best universities are choosing to go to a wider spread of HEIs.

42. The above brief summary of the impacts of the work of Aimhigher Berkshire indicates just how difficult is the task of targeting outreach work to a specific university. It shows also that effective outreach takes time and is based on relationships which arise from targeted work. This is why in Annex B (Table 5a) we have assumed that there will be a real drop in most categories of disadvantaged students entering Reading and that we will have to work hard to recover even the current picture (Fig. 1). If it should be the case that there is not a dip in students from underrepresented groups in 2012/13, we will undertake to reset our target starting points accordingly but retain the same trajectory. Reading will endeavour to maintain our existing wide network of relationships as well as to develop new, mutually-beneficial relationships with key stakeholders, resulting in an outreach programme suitable for all kinds of students. We plan particular strands of activity to focus on students from our target groups as part of this overall outreach provision. Our networks that we develop will be determined by the targeted activities undertaken and ongoing feedback sought.

**Widening Participation Activities.**

\(^{12}\) For these purposes the research intensive universities are defined as Oxford, Cambridge and the Russell Group and 94-Group HEIs.
43. At this stage, the University has not yet finalised its strategy and implementation plan for outreach and activities under this Access Agreement but expects to do so over the Summer 2011. We are also revising our the University’s Widening Participation Strategy to take into account the potential impacts of new tuition fee structures though we are clear that we will continue to adopt a holistic approach to widening participation as outlined in Paragraph 2.

44. We outline below the measures we plan to undertake in 2012/13 under the following headings:

   a. **Information Advice and Guidance** ( Paragraphs 45 to 48 )
   b. **Outreach and Aspiration Raising** ( Paragraphs 49 to 56 )
   c. **Progression and Transition Schemes** ( Paragraphs 57 to 60 )
   d. **Flexible Approach to Admissions** ( Paragraphs 61 to 66 )
   e. **Student Retention and Success** ( Paragraphs 67 to 70 )
   f. **Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation** ( Paragraphs 71, 72 )
   g. **Staffing and Resources** ( Paragraphs 71 to 73 )

**Information, Advice and Guidance**

45. The University undertakes to provide all necessary information to the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Student Loans Company (SLC). The University will also provide information to students through its prospectuses and other publications, through its web site and through many School visits directed at teachers, students and parents which will be undertaken by the staff in our Student Recruitment and Outreach team (SRO) and by individual academics, student ambassadors, mentors, and associates. The University will also be part of the national implementation of the Key Information Set (KIS) and other information as laid out in the June 2011 Policy on the Provision of information about higher education. Outcomes and next steps.13

46. The University will establish a new post of **Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) Officer** in 2012/13 to step up and coordinate our many activities in this area. The postholder will work with other members of SRO, with University Academics, with schools and FE colleges and other stakeholders and be responsible for ensuring that key information in hard copy and digital forms and advice and guidance about the benefits and costs of studying at University are provided to teachers, parents and prospective students.

47. We acknowledge that as the new fee regime progresses, high-quality information will be necessary not just for prospective students, but also for their parents, their school and college advisers and other influencers. We intend for there to be not only a continuation of the work we are already doing with schools to clarify misunderstandings and set the scene for what is to come, but also a sector-led approach to key messages which reflect the governmental and financial position. We expect the **Information Advice and Guidance Officer** will play a key role in developing and disseminating such messages especially to under-represented groups in target schools.

48. **Continuing Support for the Connexions’ Spring Thames Valley HE Conference and UCAS Fair.** The Connexions Service in Berkshire has run a UCAS fair on the University of Reading campus for almost 20 years. In its most recent iteration (March 2011) the Thames Valley HE conference ran over two days, attracted >120 University recruitment teams, and >7,500 year 10 students and their teachers from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. The students not only have the chance to learn about many universities but can attend a very wide range of subject specific talks

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13 HEFCE Statement of Policy: June 2011/18
and talks about student finance and careers in general. There is also a parents evening and this year more than 300 parents attended to hear talks on HE and to put questions to a panel of students and senior university managers on various aspects of HE including student finance, the student experience, and admissions policies. The universities associated with the Conference are the University of Reading and Thames Valley University (now the University of West London); we provide in-kind support and Reading chairs the Conference Steering Group. With local authorities withdrawing funding to Connexions, the University of Reading is committed to supporting the Conference financially as well as in kind.

**Outreach and Aspiration Raising.**

Part of our initial investment will naturally focus on recruiting some key staff with a track record of delivery in these areas in order to maintain and develop existing relationships, partnerships and networks, as well as to put in place the new activities and monitor all outreach activities that we propose in order to target our selected groups.

49. We expect that the initial years will see success on University of Reading -specific targets, while the longer-term, wider-reaching effects will most likely be seen in subsequent years as these can be dependent on relationships and partnership working. However, our targeted schemes of outreach will have measurable yearly targets attached to them so we will be able to see tangible outcomes as we progress. We consider both as equally important for the benefits of widening access both to the University of Reading and to the benefit of the sector as a whole.

50. In our outreach and aspiration raising work we plan to blend together activities and approaches that we have adopted already in the University with some of the more effective activities and approaches developed by Aimhigher Berkshire and also from the Progress South Central (Life Long Learning Network). It is crucial to try to sustain the partnerships that both units have established with a range of stakeholders. We will endeavour to retain at least some of the experience built up by these units though unfortunately the timing of the closure of both units in Summer 2011 coincides with a dip in University funding from HEFCE.

51. A key aspect of our plans is to identify a set of target Schools and FE colleges for our work. The University has long worked with schools and colleges in the area. The University’s Institute of Education works in partnership with many schools in the area and we expect to draw on the relationships they have built up to identify schools with which we might partner with. Many of those include the Schools that Aimhigher Berkshire has been working with: these schools have some of the poorest levels of achievement at GCSE-level and some of the lowest levels of participation in HE. But we also plan to extend our range to include more schools outside Berkshire, e.g. in North Hampshire, South Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. At this stage we have not finally selected the target schools for 2012/13, partly because the state school sector is in a process of transformation with the development of free schools and academies etc. One school development that the University is contributing to is the development of a new school for East Reading. The proposal for the establishment of the “Reading University Technical Academy” is being developed by a consortium led by Reading FE College, with the University, Local Education Authorities and several major commercial companies. in the IT sector. We have submitted an expression of interest and should hear whether we have reached the next stage in the summer.
52. The range of activities that we expect to be able to offer schools and FE colleges that we have targeted from 2012/13 include those listed below:
   a. Summer Schools
   b. Campus visits
   c. Masterclasses
   d. Taster days
   e. Workshops
   f. Conferences
   g. Staff/Practitioner development events
   h. Student mentoring and tutoring
   i. Student associates

53. All the academic Schools at Reading are involved in significant levels of outreach work. Much of this work involves visits to schools across a wide geographical area. The work is often aimed at supplementing the curriculum with specialist topics and raising aspirations in pupils. Some of the work is related to recruitment activities which will not only benefit the University of Reading. Much of this work is funded from departmental budgets and is not co-ordinated across or supported by the University implicitly. From 2012/13 we will support academic Schools in this work by providing more central co-ordination and advice. We will establish a Community of Practice for colleagues engaged in these kinds of outreach work in order to share effective practice. Moreover, we will set aside funds to support such work especially where it can be shown to be linked to widening access activities in our target schools.

54. Some of the specific schemes which we will wish to continue to support and expand from 2012/13 include:
   a. Outreach in Modern languages. This recognises the existing Routes into Languages Programme at Reading and it targets:
      i. Year 12 AS language students and (FE equivalents) and their teachers (tutors) and advisers.
      ii. Year 8/9 students for purposes of inspiring them to continue language studies to A level and beyond.
   b. Outreach in STEM subjects. Reading is developing a number of long-term “feeder” schemes which target the most promising STEM students in UK schools and colleges of which the Reading Science Scholars scheme is one example. Another already successful scheme that we will wish to support in this area is the outreach work entitled “Chemistry the Next Generation” in the Chemistry Department funded by the Royal Society of Chemistry. This scheme established a Chemistry Teachers Centre and it also provides an annual programme of events for schools including master classes and workshops.

55. At this stage we have not planned out the full details of the all activities under items a to g in Paragraph 52 but expect to do so at the beginning of the 2011-12 session. The overall level of activity will be a significant increase over that which the University itself undertakes now and we expect it to exceed that which Aimhigher Berkshire has been funded to deliver. We plan to track all the school and college students that engage with our activities using the MORE student tracking system that has been used effectively by Aimhigher Berkshire in conjunction with other Aimhigher units in the South East region. The resources that we will devote to these activities and other aspects of our plans are listed in the Section entitled Staffing and Resources.
56. We expect our undergraduate and postgraduate students will continue to play a significant part in our outreach and aspiration raising activities (See Paragraph 52; h and i). Reading University students already play an important role in raising aspirations in school and college students. Reading students completing such programmes are able to gain credit towards Reading’s new RED AWARD (RED: Reading Experience and Development) which requires students to build up and reflect on their portfolio of working experiences (volunteering or paid work) and complete a short programme of interactive developmental learning sessions aimed at enhancing their life skills and graduate employment prospects. Reading students are involved in several schemes are which impact on widening participation. These include:
   a. Student Tutors. Over the last 20 years more than 4000 students have acted as tutors in schools. They each have to commit to a minimum of 10 hours tutoring. Overseas students are well represented amongst the group often providing and maths and especially language tutoring. At present our opportunities are limited to schools easily reached by public transport in Berkshire. To extend the reach of the scheme the University will provide taxis so that students can reach the less accessible schools.
   b. Student Ambassadors. The University employs a large number of students as ambassadors in many different contexts. These include events such as open days, visit days, fairs, exhibitions, alumni events etc.
   c. Student Associates. This was a separately funded programme which was delivered by Aimhigher last year. It has proved popular with students and has been received with enthusiasm by schools. We plan to continue the scheme at Reading.

**Progression and Transition schemes**

These are formalised progression routes for school and college students into Reading. A focus for our work in this area are STEM and SIV subjects. Much of this work involves relevant Academic Schools in the University. The main schemes are:

   a) Reading Science Scholars (targeting “most able least likely” students in selected schools, focusing on Science and Life Science programmes and Modern and Foreign Languages programmes)
   b) Reading Feedback Scheme (UoR students going back into their schools, targeting schools with low HE progression rates)
   c) Reading Shadowing Scheme (provision for younger age individuals whose schools may not choose to access our outreach but who want notwithstanding to experience the University)
   d) Progression Programme for locally-based students, targeting MALL students from selected local areas, not focusing predominantly on schools outreach, but including mature students, child carers, students with children, students with disabilities. We intend to maintain our collaborative work with Progress South Central LLN contacts here in establishing and broadening this
   e) Monitoring mechanisms and targets for these schemes will include
      i. investment levels increasing as the schemes expand;
      ii. numbers of students from target groups involved;
      iii. numbers of students from other groups involved, which will indicate the wider effects of our outreach activities and not a simple focus on the University of Reading’s benefits;
      iv. numbers of students enrolled at Reading;
      v. numbers of students who enrolled at another institution – our investment and involvement in the MORE scheme (above) will be critical in monitoring sector-wide effects of localised activities.
Flexible approach to admissions; the ASPIRE Scheme:

57. We intend to develop and deliver over the next year (for launch in 2012) the ‘ASPIRE’ scheme to raise aspirations to enter HE in the most able least likely students from disadvantaged backgrounds (see also Paragraphs 28 and 29). ASPIRE will allow effective relationships to be built with potential students and with existing and new school partners, and for contextual data to be gathered on individuals. The scheme will enable the University to consider making a lower offer of admission from that published to students from identified target groups, and for those considering entry into subject areas to improve the diversity of their student cohort. The important factor in developing this kind of scheme is that we build relationships with the participants, and it is these relationships that will enable us to gather meaningful contextual data on those individuals as well as being able to keep in touch with them should they choose another HE institution to Reading. As part of this scheme, we will:

   a. identify subject areas to which we wish to recruit or which are currently under-represented by the target groups that we have identified;
   b. with the help of schools, identify students who are “most able but least likely” and from disadvantaged backgrounds, e.g. no previous parental participation in HE, or residing in low participation wards;
   c. put in place a programme of activities and contacts for students who join the scheme who will be expected to engage with them over the duration of the ASPIRE programme. The programme will comprise a combination of bespoke, on-campus (potentially residential) activities, top-up courses that students complete, mentoring from University students and potentially Reading alumni, and the information advice and guidance;
   d. revise the University Admissions Policy to enable the following:

      ii. at the point of offer-making (standard application procedure), we stipulate that two offers are on the table, and explain how the alternative system works. We then guide the student through the bespoke activities to their lower offer;
      iii. promotion of the bespoke courses separately in order to build interest and as part of that promotion we talk about how these could be a way into a quality University without always needing the really high grades. Students would then apply with the completed bespoke training already in hand.
      iv. The use contextual data about the individual students – we will need to check the existing identifiers already on UCAS forms to make sure that we have enough information, as well as through face-to-face work with schools that identifies potential students.

58. The ASPIRE scheme will need to be designed around our curriculum, in multiple subject areas and subsequently mapped onto suitable schools. It is a significant undertaking, but one which could be transformational in ensuring that Reading is as approachable and accessible as possible. (£50,000).

59. In order to develop the scheme, we will appoint an Outreach Project Officer for one-year 2011-12 to carry out the following:

   a. devise and implement the ASPIRE scheme;
   b. establish the academic processes behind differential offer-making;
   c. clarify the institution’s position and information on qualification equivalencies;
d. revise the University Admissions Policy and relevant webpages and external listings as appropriate to ensure that our target groups can find the information that they need;

e. ensure that our information on the above is clear, timely, relevant and unambiguous;

60. Institutionally, we will commit to reviewing our published information (printed and digital) under the guiding principles that our information is clear, easy to find and easy to understand for all types of students.

**Student Retention and Success**

61. Our position, as stated in our Widening Participation Strategy, is that student retention as a crucial part of our widening participation agenda. It is an intrinsic characteristic of our institution that we provide appropriate and tailored institutional resource and advice services to enhance the teaching and learning experience at Reading, for all students. Although this first iteration of our Access Agreement under the new fee regime will not include specific, costed projects, we will expect that efforts in this area of our Access Agreement will expand in future years in order to reflect success in achieving our targets and milestones, as well as to ensure that those students who are recruited to Reading are able to make the post of their career potential, irrespective of their background.

62. Although our WPSA shows the deeply embedded financial model at Reading, we intend to identify some additional areas into which we will invest new money in order to do two things:

   a) Respond in an appropriately high quality way to increased numbers overall of students from our target groups.

   b) Deliver new, or enhance existing services that we know are used by and of interest to students from our target groups.

63. It will naturally take some time to identify demand and need, to test our assumptions and to allocate resource appropriately. However, Reading together with Oxford Brookes was funded under the Paul Hamlyn Foundation/HEFCE Retention Project to examine and compare the impacts of the different approaches to improving student retention in the two institutions. That project will be complete later this year and we should be able to feed back the outcomes of the metastudy of all the contributory projects into our approach to improving retention at Reading. An early outcome is that transition into university is a key time for many students. We are already considering revamping our approach to the Freshers’ Week experience and other transitions that students experience. We have also collected strong evidence that a personal tutor system such as we have at Reading has a key role to play.

64. We have already begun to assess two critical factors in both recruitment and retention of students from our target groups of students: withdrawal rates and degree outcomes. Our early work is already raising some important questions.

| Table 7. Retention and Success amongst different categories of students. |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Category                        | Withdrawal (average annual rate) | 1sts and 2:1s (Average over 2 years) |
| Overall                         | 3%                          | 73%             |
| Non-white                       | 4%                          | 57%             |
| Disability known to University  | 2%                          | 68%             |
| In receipt of DSA               | 2%                          | 71%             |
| Not from independent schools    | 2%                          | 74%             |
| POLAR2 regions                  | 4%                          | 74%             |
65. Table 7 above summarises the work that we have been doing in this area. We can see that although our retention rates are generally very good, there are some significant differences between different groups of students and when we look at measures of success we can see that non-white students and to a lesser extent students with disabilities, have lower levels of degree success than the average student. However, we have noted that students from POLAR 2 regions do as well as the average student, which bears out studies reported elsewhere. Therefore we are confident that students disadvantaged in this way are going to be successful at Reading once they enrol. These kinds of studies will enable us to focus our targeted work on ensuring that our student outcomes are consistent.

66. The kinds of support and services that we deliver will be targeted at least to maintain our relatively low dropout rates, and to ensure that all of our students perform to the best of their abilities. We would expect the areas covered in our research, and subsequent targeted investment, to include:

   a) Student Support Services, including Disability Support, Study Advisers, Counselling Services, Peer-to-Peer Mentoring
   b) Employability, including access to work placements and internships, skills development, careers advice (both pre-application as part of outreach activities and after enrolment in HE)
   c) Library facilities
   d) Development and Enhancement of Teaching and Learning to ensure full accessibility and participation by students from our target groups. This may include development of online materials, assessment of curriculum content and delivery mechanisms, coupled with the appropriate support services as part of a continuing integrated approach to retention and success at the University of Reading.

**Tracking, monitoring and evaluation**

67. The institutional responsibility for approving and delivery of our Access Agreement rests with three top level University bodies: The University Council and the University Senate both of which have student representation vested in the President and Vice Presidents of the Reading University Student Union (RUSU) Union. Strategic responsibility lies with the Senior Management Board (SMB) of the University but this contains no student members. The Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning is the member of the SMB who has special responsibility for the University’s widening participation strategy working in particular through a Sub-Committee of the SMB, The Committee on Strategy for Recruitment and Academic Provision (STRAP).

68. We expect our monitoring work and investment to take two forms: the more operational work of the Recruitment and Access Officer, and a member of staff in the Planning Support Office to do the statistical work required to monitor investment, performance and success in the areas set out in this Access Agreement, as well as collation of internal and external information and data in this area to support both internal stakeholders and future students through the unambiguous communication of facts in collaboration with colleagues. This post will also support the alignment of future Access Agreements with the development and reporting mechanisms regarding future WPSAs.

69. All of our activities (outreach, dissemination of financial support, retention and success) will have in-built annual participation targets in order that we are able to monitor progress institutionally. Success may not always be in the form of recruitment of students to the University; we will devise a set of
suitably representative measures in each area that are truly reflective of both individual and institutional need.

70. A key component in measuring the success of our activities will depend on being able to track school and college students who engage with those activities. We intend to subscribe to the MORE Group (Monitoring, Research and Evaluation Group) which Aimhigher Berkshire was a member of. The Group, established amongst South East Aimhighers comprises a number of data analysts who are able to use the personal and confidential information that we obtain from participants in outreach activities to provide bespoke statistical analysis and benchmarking on widening participation. The results that Aimhigher Berkshire have obtained from the MORE Group have been very helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of various activities by tracking participants into Universities as was reported earlier (See Paragraph 27)

Staffing and Resources.

Running up to and during the period of this Access Agreement we expect to build up a team of staff which will augment the current staff in various of the central teams we have in place now, in order to provide greater coordination and support for the wealth of recruitment and outreach activities delivered by our academic Schools and Departments especially aimed at target schools and we will back this up by providing resources to enable us to deliver the activities we have described above.

Investment in 2011/12.

71. In 2011, as a forward commitment to the 2012/13 Access Agreement we expect to appoint an additional post of Recruitment and Outreach Officer (Grade 6, £44,500) to work in our Schools Recruitment and Outreach Team. The post holder will be responsible for maintaining links built up with a range of partners and stakeholders (e.g. Schools and Colleges, local authorities etc, our academic schools and departments), and will develop some of the new activities that we will roll out during 2012/13. We will also provide additional consumables, travel costs and other resources to support this work.

Investment in 2012/13

72. In 2012, at least 10% of the funding obtained under this Access Agreement will be used to fund new posts or support activities described above.
   a. To support our proposals on Information Advice and Guidance we will appoint an Information Advice and Guidance Officer (Grade 6: £44,500 p.a.). For role see Paragraph 47. We will also provide financial and other support for the Connexions Thames Valley UCAS Conference;
   b. We will boost our work on student recruitment, outreach and aspiration-raising by appointing additional posts and providing additional resources. We will:
      i. appoint a Senior Recruitment and Access Officer (Grade 7: £56,000 p.a.) – delivering key areas of new activity as listed below as part of our suite of institutional outreach activities as a whole including information, advice and guidance, events for outreach, monitoring of success of outreach activities;
      ii. appoint an Access Projects Officer (Grade 6: £44,500)- responsible for developing and implementing new streams of outreach and access activities and in particular the Aspire Scheme;
iii. appoint a **Recruitment and Access Assistant** (Grade 6: £44,500 p.a.)—providing clerical support for key outreach activities as part of our suite of institutional outreach activities as a whole—e.g. taking bookings for events, ensuring that web information is clear, relevant and timely, managing outreach officers’ diaries, ensuring that monitoring mechanisms and data collection of outreach participants are collected, collated and stored efficiently;

iv. appoint a **Recruitment and Access Intern** (Grade 5: £35,500) - to assist with development and delivery of activities;

v. provide extra funding to expand our Student Tutoring and mentoring scheme, increase the number of Student Ambassador places and continue the Aimhigher Student Associate Scheme;

vi. develop the role of a **Widening Participation Officer** in each of our Academic Schools to work with the central team in our Schools Recruitment and Outreach Office. We will also provide a fund that our academic schools and departments can bid for in connection with their outreach and aspiration work and in particular in STEM and SIV subjects.

c. We will boost our activities in support of enhancing **student retention and success** by adding one new post to each of the following teams Student Study Advice Centre, Student Counselling Service, and the Disability Office (levels of posts yet to be determined):

   i. **Study Advisor**
   ii. **Student Counsellor**
   iii. **Disability Officer**

d. We recognise that effective **tracking, monitoring, evaluation and reporting** on our widening participation activities will be crucial. Therefore we will:

   i. Appoint an additional **Planning Support Officer** (Grade 6; £44,500); for our Planning Support Office which provides statistical information internally and to external bodies such as HESA etc and will provide information for the KIS. This person will be responsible for working with the MORE data sets and attending meetings of that group (see below)

   ii. We will subscribe to and support the development of the MORE Group.

e. We expect to provide appropriate levels administrative support to support the student financial support packages that we will offer under this Access Agreement. These are becoming increasingly complex with the existence of different iterations of Access Agreements including the introduction of the NSP.

**Investment in 2013/14 and beyond:**

73. We are expecting to be required to submit an Access Agreement covering 2013/14 in late 2011 and expect that it will sustain the direction and activity set out out in this Access Agreement. However, it is likely to be influenced by the outcomes of the Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (now delayed until the end of the year) and the expected Government White Paper due later this year and other announcements surrounding the funding of HE in England.
### Table 5 - Milestones and targets

**Table 5a - Statistical milestones and targets relating to your applicants, entrants or student body (e.g. HESA, UCAS or internal targets)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please select milestone/target type from the dropdown menu</th>
<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State School (HESA Table T1a)</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>2221 (83.3%)</td>
<td>2190 (82.6%)</td>
<td>2190 (82.6%)</td>
<td>2220 (83.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS-SEC (HESA Table T1a)</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>621 (23.4%)</td>
<td>600 (22.6%)</td>
<td>600 (22.6%)</td>
<td>610 (23.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPN (HESA Table T1a)</td>
<td>POLAR 2</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>156 (5.9%)</td>
<td>140 (5.3%)</td>
<td>140 (5.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care-Leavers</td>
<td></td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>DSA</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>159 (6.1%)</td>
<td>161 (6.1%)</td>
<td>161 (6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>All Known Disabled (including DSA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>(non-white)</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>318 (12.0%)</td>
<td>318 (12.0%)</td>
<td>334 (12.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income backgrounds</td>
<td>(£25K or less)</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>547 (20.6%)</td>
<td>520 (19.6%)</td>
<td>520 (19.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Lowest-income backgrounds (£25K or less)</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>468 (17.7%)</td>
<td>444 (16.8%)</td>
<td>444 (16.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Middle-income backgrounds (£25K to £42K)</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>145 (5.5%)</td>
<td>141 (5.3%)</td>
<td>141 (5.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature</td>
<td></td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>321 (12.1%)</td>
<td>288 (10.9%)</td>
<td>288 (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Mature (no previous HE and Polar 2)</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>31 (1.2%)</td>
<td>25 (0.9%)</td>
<td>25 (0.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu</td>
<td>Description (500 characters maximum)</td>
<td>Baseline year</td>
<td>Baseline data</td>
<td>Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</td>
<td>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational targets</td>
<td>Identify and work with specific target schools in Berkshire and beyond 2010/11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student support services</td>
<td>Increase support for study advice and counselling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)</td>
<td>Summer and Easter Schools 2010/11</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Visits of staff and outreach team to schools/ HE events and fairs 2010/11</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Student Visit / Easter days at Reading 2010/11</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Reading student tutor/mentor scheme 2010/11</td>
<td>200 p.a.</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual data</td>
<td>contextual data</td>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td></td>
<td>50/0</td>
<td>100/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management targets</td>
<td>Establish partnership working with schools and other HEIs on tracking through the MoRE project. 2010/11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
<td>established by Progress South Central</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Masterclasses for Schools at Reading 2010/11</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Information, Advice and Guidance 2010/11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Thames Valley HE Conference (UCAS fair) 2010/11</td>
<td>7400</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td>7500</td>
<td>7500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please give details in the next column)</td>
<td>Improving success students at graduation (non non-white and students with disabilities) 2010/11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, we encourage you to provide targets around your outreach work (including collaborative outreach work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access. These should be measurable outcomes-based targets and should focus on the number of pupils reached by a particular activity/programme, or number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.
Annex A: Access agreements for 2012-13: OFFA template for mainstream ITT providers (HEIs and FECs)

| Name of institution | University of Reading |

Please complete this template, and the Excel return at Annex B, and return to us using the HEFCE extranet by 30 March 2012.

Where your arrangements are the same as for other courses, we would encourage you to cross-refer to your main agreement wherever possible, rather than seeking to replicate information from that main document here.

Part one: Introduction to your agreement

A. Your current position in relation to access and, where appropriate, retention

Please use this section to set out any specific issues or aims for your access agreement work in respect of ITT that aren’t already set out in your existing agreement for 2012-13. This section doesn’t have to be long; however, it will help us to understand what your access agreement is setting out to achieve in respect of ITT. You may wish to consider whether there are separate issues for undergraduate and postgraduate ITT.

You may also wish to cross-refer to the issues or aims stated in your main agreement, if appropriate.

In addition to the focus on the commitment outlined in the University of Reading Access Agreement 2012-13 to the recruitment and retention of students from: lower socio-economic groups; neighbourhoods where HE participation is low; low-income backgrounds; and students with disabilities and students who have been in care the University of Reading’s Institute of Education will focus its work in relation to access on removing barriers to teacher training for the best quality candidates from underrepresented groups - specifically black and minority ethnic groups (BME), and male entrants to primary teaching.

Part two: Fee limits, spend on access and financial support for ITT trainees

B. Fees you are proposing to charge for your ITT courses

Your access agreement should set out the tuition fees you intend to charge new entrants to a) undergraduate and b) postgraduate ITT in 2012-13. There is no requirement or expectation that your fee for undergraduate or postgraduate ITT should be the same as for your other courses – this is a matter for you to decide.
The University will charge the maximum permitted tuition fee of £9,000 to all new UK/EU entrants to all full-time ITT programmes, both Undergraduate and Post Graduate, from 2012-13.

C. Amounts of additional fee income to be spent on access measures

_Taking into account any new access agreement investment relating to ITT, as well as your existing agreement, what is your estimated spend on access measures as a proportion of your income over £6,000 per fee?_

As a broad guideline, for undergraduate ITT, our starting expectation is the same as that set out in our original guidance on how to produce an access agreement for 2012-13 (see OFFA 2011/01, paragraph 39). For postgraduate ITT, we would expect you to recycle a minimum of around 10 per cent of your fee income over £6,000 on access or retention measures. (Note: we will be taking a holistic view when considering whether your proposed spend is in line with our expectations. In other words, we do not necessarily require you to ring-fence set amounts for undergraduate or postgraduate initial teacher training. You simply need to make sure that the overall levels of spend – including ITT – are in line with our expectations.)

For 2012/13, the University of Reading intends to spend approximately 14% of the fee income above the basic fee of £6,000 from all ITT students equating to over £124,000 expenditure.

D. Financial support for trainees

_In this section you should set out:_

- what you plan to spend on targeted fee waivers, bursaries and in-kind support for a) undergraduate and b) postgraduate trainees in 2012-13
- the amounts of support and the eligibility criteria for new entrants.

You may wish to state whether the financial support for these trainees is the same or differs from your existing agreement.

The financial support available to new undergraduate ITT trainees for 2012-13 will be as per the University of Reading Access Agreement 2012-13 sections 18 and 19, eligible students will be able to access the scholarships available under the National Scholarship Programme and Reading Bursaries.
Postgraduate ITT trainees are ineligible for the National Scholarship programme. Financial support will therefore be available to eligible postgraduate ITT students in the form of a £500 cash bursary for those students recognised as having the greatest needs — i.e., those from households with incomes of under £16k — and a £250 cash bursary for students from households with income between £16k and £25k. In order to balance the needs of students with TDA support against those without, all students will be eligible for these bursaries, but when calculating household incomes for those students with TDA support, we will take into consideration the TDA training bursary.

Part three: outreach and retention

E. Outreach and retention work

If you are proposing to introduce additional outreach or retention work in respect of ITT, over and above the outreach/retention work you have committed to in your existing 2012-13 access agreement, please include details here.

Alternatively, please indicate where your outreach or retention work in respect of ITT is already covered by your main agreement.

For the purposes of an access agreement, outreach work includes any activity that involves raising aspirations and attainment among potential applicants from under-represented groups and encouraging them to apply to higher education. This includes outreach directed at young or mature students aspiring to full or part-time study. We particularly encourage sustained, co-ordinated activities that work with pupils and other potential applicants over a number of years.

By retention, we mean the additional (new) retention measures you commit to put in place to improve student retention and success (ensuring that trainees from under-represented groups access the full benefits of higher education).

The outreach and retention work outlined in the University of Reading Access Agreement 2012-13 paragraphs 44 to 73 will be extended to include all ITT students. It is envisaged that this will have the greatest impact on undergraduate entrants to ITT as postgraduate entrants will already have significant experience of higher education. In addition to these measures specific outreach and retention activities will be undertaken within the University of Reading’s Institute of Education targeted towards the recruitment and retention of teachers from BME backgrounds and male primary teachers.

Work on the recruitment and retention of teachers from BME backgrounds will build on existing TDA funded work. The University of Reading is a founding member and leading stakeholder in the South East regional BME ITT project employing and hosting the BME ITT Project Manager. This project has targeted structural issues in BME under-representation in teaching. Some of the key areas upon which we would build in on-going outreach and retention work include: addressing the mismatch between BME applications and acceptance rates in ITT; supporting applicants from BME backgrounds in securing necessary pre-course school experiences; the provision of targeted pre-course and marketing materials which represent teachers from BME backgrounds...
addressing their views and concerns about teaching and ITT; the provision of in course support to trainees from BME backgrounds in order to ensure retention on programmes and into the profession; liaising with local community and other groups, connecting to existing networks and developing new networks to engender interest in teaching as a career; conducting evaluations, monitoring and gathering data and relevant research and evaluation information to inform practise.

Work on the recruitment and retention of men in primary teaching will focus specifically on targeting male applicants at the pre-application stage and on targeted interventions to ensure retention on primary ITT programmes. Targeted information and guidance will be provided. Outreach work will be undertaken to target male undergraduate students to make the transition to post graduate primary ITT. Use will be made of existing and former students as ambassadors for men into teaching. There will also be significant support across the duration of programmes, for example, peer mentoring and support groupings. A significant element of ensuring the success of both initiatives will be on-going identification, tracking and monitoring.

**Part four: Targets, milestones and monitoring**

**F. Targets and milestones**

You may choose to develop specific additional targets and milestones which assess your performance in ITT over time – particularly if ITT trainees make up a significant proportion of your overall student body.

Alternatively, you may have targets and milestones in your existing 2012-13 access agreement which you now also wish to apply to undergraduate and/or postgraduate ITT trainees.

These targets may be statistical – based on how representative your entrants are and/or your retention performance – and might include annual or interim milestones to help you monitor whether you are making progress.

You may wish to include criteria around the numbers of trainees in receipt of a full or partial maintenance grant, as financial data will need to be collected to determine bursary support and the data will also be accessible through the Student Loans Company for HEBSS subscribers. You may also wish to consider the TDA guidance at Annex C which gives information on specific groups that are underrepresented in the teaching profession.

In this section, please state whether you intend to develop additional targets and milestones, or the extent to which you intend to use targets and milestones in your existing agreement which you now wish to extend to apply to undergraduate and/or postgraduate ITT trainees. Where you have new or amended milestones and targets, you should set these out in your Excel template (Annex B) at Table 6.

The targets and milestones set out in the University of Reading Access Agreement 2012-13 will be applied to ITT students. In addition, targets have been set for recruitment to ITT programmes in terms of male entrants and entrants from BME backgrounds as set
out in Table 6. These targets will need to be formulated annually as they will be linked to TDA allocations.

G. Your monitoring arrangements

In your existing 2012-13 access agreement, you set out how you intended to monitor your fulfilment of your agreement. If you wish to add anything further, following the inclusion of ITT in your agreement, you may do so here.

In addition to the monitoring arrangements set out in the University of Reading Access Agreement 2012-13 annual ITT programme improvement planning and the completion of the TDA Self Evaluation Document (SED) will monitor progress in relation to outreach and retention activities and targets in relation to male primary entrants and entrants from BME backgrounds.

Part five: Information to students

H. Provision of information to trainees

As set out in our initial guidance for 2012-13 access agreements (OFFA 2011/01), you must publish clear, accessible and timely information for applicants and trainees on the fees you will charge and any financial support you will offer. This information should make it clear exactly what level of financial support you are offering trainees in each year of their studies. As well as providing clear and up-to-date information through your own information channels (websites, prospectuses etc), you also committed to provide such timely information to UCAS and SLC as they reasonably require to populate their applicant-facing web services. We will assume that this commitment extends to GTTR, where appropriate.

If you wish to add anything further, following the inclusion of ITT in your agreement, you may do so here.

Clear, accessible and timely information will be made available to applicants and to trainees on the fees that we will charge and the support that we will offer. As a minimum this will be via our own website and prospectus as well as by those managed by UCAS and the GTTR.
### Table 6 - Targets and milestones

#### Table 6a - Statistical milestones and targets relating to your ITT applicants, entrants or student body (e.g. HESA, GTTR or internal targets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course type</th>
<th>Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu</th>
<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate</strong></td>
<td>Gender (e.g. male primary teachers)</td>
<td>BA (ed)</td>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postgraduate</strong></td>
<td>Gender (e.g. male primary teachers)</td>
<td>PGCE Primary</td>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate</strong></td>
<td>Black and minority ethnic groups</td>
<td>BA (ed)</td>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postgraduate</strong></td>
<td>Black and minority ethnic groups</td>
<td>PGCE Primary</td>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postgraduate</strong></td>
<td>Black and minority ethnic groups</td>
<td>PGCE Secondary</td>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6b - Other milestones and targets relating to ITT students

Alongside applicant and entrant targets, you may wish to provide targets around your outreach work (including collaborative outreach work where appropriate) or other initiatives to illustrate your progress towards increasing access. These should be measurable outcomes based targets and should focus on the number of pupils reached by a particular activity/programme, or number of schools worked with, and what the outcomes were, rather than simply recording the nature/number of activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Please select milestone/target type from the drop down menu</th>
<th>Description (500 characters maximum)</th>
<th>Baseline year</th>
<th>Baseline data</th>
<th>Yearly milestones/targets (numeric where possible, however you may use text)</th>
<th>Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>