

## Executive summary

---

This access Agreement between the University of Oxford and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) covers students admitted in the academic year 2013-14. It builds on the extensive experience and evidence gained by the University and its colleges in recent years, described in previous access Agreements. Autonomy and diversity characterise the collegiate University, and our access activities and arrangements are designed to strengthen those qualities.

Oxford's aims are: to **attract** applications from all individuals with the potential to study at the University; to **inform** them fully; to **admit** the very best; to **educate** them in an intensive, world-class teaching system, and to **support** them while at Oxford. The following pages contain more information about current and planned activity in:

**Attracting** UK students with the academic potential to study at Oxford, especially those who are currently under-represented (outreach work, paragraphs 33-76);

**Informing** potential applicants and current students about the University, the cost of study, the support available to them, and the selection process (provision of information, paragraphs 137-139);

**Admitting** those with the greatest academic ability and potential in their chosen subject, on merit alone, using rigorous, fair and consistent procedures (fair admissions, paragraphs 77-83);

**Educating** them in a world-class system marked out by the tutorial system and the collegiate environment (cost and subsidy of education at Oxford, paragraph 14);

**Supporting and retaining** them at Oxford – financially, academically, pastorally, and in terms of careers advice (noting Oxford's current excellent retention rate of 98%) (student finance, paragraphs 15-32) and on-course support (paragraphs 84-93).

This Agreement therefore details: (i) an extensive but carefully targeted programme of access and outreach work; (ii) a rigorous, academic-led and resource-intensive admissions process; (iii) generous financial support for students from less well-off backgrounds, including measures to support and retain them whilst on course; and (iv) how these measures will in future be monitored against our targets.

### **(i) Access and outreach (paragraphs 33-76)**

We will devote over £4.5m in 2013-14 to **access and outreach work**, aimed at attracting applicants from non-traditional backgrounds, and equipping them with the information they need to make competitive applications. We will also ensure that information about our educational provision and the financial support available to students is clear and easily accessible.

### **(ii) Admissions (paragraphs 77-83)**

This Agreement reflects Oxford's strategy of seeking to attract applications for undergraduate study from all those within the UK (as well as internationally) who can demonstrate the ability and potential to benefit from the intensive and highly academic courses of study which we offer. It also reflects our commitment to an admissions process which is fair and transparent, which assesses academic achievement and potential, and which is capable of distinguishing the very best from a large pool (17,000 plus) of extremely well qualified applicants. We will continue to develop the use of contextual information within the selection process.

### **(iii) Student finance and on-course support (paragraphs 15-32, 84-92)**

We plan to devote substantial additional resources (£2.9m, covering two cohorts of students) to a range of **tuition charge waivers** for students from lower-income households, on top of a continuing package of **generous maintenance bursaries** costing up to an estimated £6.5m in 2013-14.

### **(iv) Targets and outcomes (paragraphs 96-127)**

We have set ourselves a range of targets against which the outcomes of the access, admissions and support measures can be assessed. Success needs to be judged over a period of several years as the lead times involved (particularly for access work) are significant. The activity set out in this Agreement will therefore be kept under review and the effectiveness of the various measures outlined here, together with experience gained elsewhere, will help to inform future policy.

Our overall objective is that the activities outlined within this Agreement should have long-term effects on widening access to Oxford from currently under-represented groups. We believe that the measures also should have a wider impact in helping to raise attainment in secondary education and improving participation in higher education as a whole.

The measures outlined above will cost up to £11.24m in 2013-14, broken down as follows:

ACTIVITY	OFFA countable	Not OFFA countable	Total
<i>Outreach</i>			
Baseline expenditure in 2010-11	£1.90m	£2.10m	£4.01m
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-12 and 2012-13	£0.54m	-£0.02m	£0.51m
Expenditure in 2013-14	£2.44m	£2.08m	£4.52m
<i>Retention, support and employability (including monitoring and evaluation)</i>			
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-12 and 2012-13	£0.19m	£0.22m	£0.41m
<i>Financial Support</i>			
Bursaries (including cohorts on pre-2012 entry scheme, and two cohorts on post-2012 entry scheme)	£6.50m		£6.50m
Tuition charge waivers (first and second year of scheme only)	£2.90m		£2.90m
Less NSP allocation for 2013-14	-£0.79m		-£0.79m
<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENDITURE in 2013/14:</b>	<b>£11.24m</b>	<b>£2.30m</b>	<b>£13.54m</b>

Once the Government's allocation for the National Scholarship Programme of £0.79m has been subtracted, additional expenditure in 2013-14 as defined in the OFFA guidance is estimated to be up to £11.24m. Additional expenditure as a proportion of the University's tuition charge revenue (£27.0m), taking account of the 'higher' fee appropriate to each cohort, will be around 42% (as against the expectation in the guidance of 35%). We note that the present Agreement covers students admitted in the academic year 2013-14. For subsequent cohorts, we shall review total spend and the balance of spending between the various measures, including the balance between tuition charge waivers, bursaries, outreach, access and student support, in the light of evidence of their respective impacts and effectiveness.

The figures above include support for students ordinarily resident in the UK and the rest of the EU. The figures also include expenditure on bursaries and tuition charge waivers for PGCE students.

## Contents

Executive summary .....	1
Contents .....	4
Introduction .....	5
1. Undergraduate and PGCE tuition charges and waivers in 2013-14.....	7
2. Bursary support for students in 2013-14 .....	11
3a. Additional access measures: outreach.....	13
(i) Focus of access and outreach activity .....	14
(ii) Widening access to Oxford .....	14
(iii) Widening participation in higher education .....	18
(iv) Widening participation in Initial Teacher Training .....	21
(iv) Future developments in access and outreach.....	22
3b. Additional access measures: student retention, success, and employability.....	24
3c. Expenditure on current and additional activities.....	27
4. Targets and outcomes .....	28
5. Equality and diversity .....	37
6. Monitoring and evaluation .....	39
7. Provision of information to prospective students .....	40
Appendices.....	42
Annexe D: Baseline data for targets and milestones.....	43

## Introduction

1. The six over-arching objectives in the University of Oxford's current strategic plan include the following: '(ii) Provide an exceptional education for both undergraduates and graduates, characterised by the close contact of students with distinguished scholars in supportive collegiate and departmental communities'; '(iv) Recruit the very best students nationally and internationally through an equitable process based on achievement and potential'; '(vi) Deliver outstanding facilities and services and manage them effectively and responsively for the benefit of staff and students'.
2. These objectives as applied to undergraduates involve **informing** and **attracting** applications from all individuals with the potential to study at the University; **admitting** the very best; **educating** them in a world-class, highly personalised teaching system; and **supporting** them while at Oxford in terms of finance, welfare and careers advice.
3. These objectives are delivered in partnership between the University (including its four academic divisions and their constituent departments and faculties), and the Oxford colleges. They are also embodied in the main principles of the Common Framework for Undergraduate Admissions, which governs Oxford's admissions processes. It was adopted by the collegiate University in 2007 and ensures a consistent and rigorous approach to selecting students who show the academic ability and potential to flourish in Oxford's intensive, highly academic and tutorially-based undergraduate teaching system.
4. **Informing** and **attracting** applicants from all backgrounds: Considerable resource is dedicated to outreach and access activity carried out across the collegiate University, with the intention of widening access to Oxford. Notable activity includes highly targeted work to inform teachers and guidance advisers in schools so that they can best support their students through the admissions process; targeted, frequently residential, activities in Oxford to encourage students from under-represented groups to apply and to help them make competitive applications; activity to assist and inform candidates at key points in their school education about the choices and options available to them; and a coordinated programme of visits to schools and colleges which covers the whole of the UK. The University is also involved, locally, in activities to increase awareness about higher education in general, particularly among pre-16-year-olds. Much of this work is delivered through collaborations with other universities and partner organisations.
5. **Admitting** the very best: Admission to Oxford is on the basis of academic achievement and potential. The selection process aims to identify the most able, by subject, from among a very highly qualified field of candidates. While the purpose of

our access work is to ensure that all students who are likely to be able to meet the required standards have the opportunity to apply, our admissions procedures aim to select those candidates who best meet our published selection criteria. Admissions decisions are made by the academics who will usually teach the candidates they admit. The system is designed to look at the whole field of applicants for any given subject and to identify those best able to excel in that subject. Individual students are admitted both by their college, and by the University (at matriculation). In addition faculties and departments play an important part in the admissions process, and collaborate closely with colleges under the Common Framework.

6. **Educating** students in a world-class system: The cost of educating an undergraduate at Oxford (see paragraph 14) is higher than at almost all other UK HEIs. In large part this is due to its resource-intensive tutorial provision, but it is also due to the very high quality and range of support facilities and infrastructure available at both college and University level. The quality and value of our undergraduate education are recognised worldwide. Oxford is determined to maintain and develop this high quality provision. All of our undergraduate courses are a rigorous preparation for challenging and rewarding careers.
7. **Supporting** students: Increased fees may bring a significant new challenge in attracting students from lower income households, and therefore this agreement contains proposals for a very generous package of financial support for students from less well-off families. Oxford's collegiate system provides every undergraduate with the bedrock of their university career. College tutors guide and support students, overseeing their intellectual and personal development. Tutorials are delivered in colleges, and most students live in their college for at least two years of their course. Each college offers an extensive network of welfare services, ranging from student peer group support, to advisers, chaplains and counsellors, and has a doctor and a nurse associated with it. This is complemented by the services provided by the University, as outlined in paragraphs 84-93.
8. The University of Oxford shares the sector's widespread concern about the potential impact of the current reductions in the HEFCE grant on the stability of the HE sector, and about the rapidity with which these significant changes are being introduced.
9. The University will seek to manage the transition to the new arrangements as carefully as possible, in order to minimise any potential uncertainty amongst applicants to Oxford about their ability to afford to study here, and to benefit from the exceptional teaching and learning environment which we offer.

10. All of the activities that the University and its colleges undertake to widen access will be subject to evaluation against our targets. The findings, along with research into access and outreach that we are currently undertaking, will assist in informing the direction of future access Agreements. Where our findings have a broader application to the higher education sector we will ensure that they are appropriately disseminated.
11. The targets outlined later in this Agreement fall into two categories:
  - Those which relate to specific widening access initiatives and their outcomes;
  - Those which will serve to demonstrate over time that the student body has diversified and includes a higher proportion of UK students from backgrounds where social, economic or educational factors have placed them at a disadvantage.
12. The University works closely with the Oxford University Students Union (OUSU), who are represented on each of the committees responsible for developing the Oxford financial support package and outreach programme, for approving the access Agreement, and for monitoring progress in reaching our targets and outcomes (see paragraphs 85, 88, 136 and Annexe D). The University also collaborates with OUSU on a number of joint outreach initiatives (see paragraph 35).
13. Part-time students do not form part of this Agreement as the part-time undergraduate higher education courses offered by the University do not exceed the OFFA-countable £4,500 fee threshold.

## **1. Undergraduate and PGCE tuition charges and waivers in 2013-14**

14. The University of Oxford and its colleges are educational charities, which since their foundation have been devoting substantial resources of their own to supporting the costs of Oxford's resource-intensive education. Provision of financial support for undergraduate students at Oxford has been a prominent feature of the work of the University and its colleges for many years. In addition to bursaries, colleges have always supported students with additional assistance, for example, hardship grants. A considerable benefit of the collegiate system is that welfare provision can be targeted in this individualised manner. We estimate that the average cost of an undergraduate education at Oxford is in excess of £16,000 per student per year (based on TRAC analysis). Income in 2011-12 is approximately £7,600 per Home/EU student per year, demonstrating a subsidy in excess of £8,000 per student per year, from other University and college sources (principally donation and endowment income, together with income raised from commercial activities).

15. Against this background, the University will set a tuition charge for full-time Home and EU students of £9,000 per year from 2012 entry. Based on our current student cohort we anticipate that approximately 15% of students will receive a partial tuition charge waiver, detailed below, making the range of effective charges between £3,500 per year and £9,000 per year. Even at a headline fee of £9,000 per annum the University and its colleges will still be subsidising the full £16,000+ cost of an Oxford course from their own sources to the tune of several thousand pounds per student per year. Our undergraduate provision will, therefore, continue to offer exceptional value for money.

### ***National Scholarship Programme***

16. The University believes that applicants from households with incomes below £16,000 are likely to be the most debt averse, and are therefore more likely to be deterred from participating in higher education and to face the greatest challenges in making the transition from school or college to university education.
17. The University has been allocated £792k by HEFCE to award 264 National Scholarship Programme awards to students starting their course in 2013-14. If the University is permitted to continue charging more than £6,000 in tuition fees, it will take part in the National Scholarship Programme and will use the allocated awards as a contribution towards the overall costs of providing financial support to students who have a household income below £25,000 per year, in line with the NSP guidelines.

### ***Extending the National Scholarship Programme***

18. The University will match the NSP funding allocation and extend the NSP through a system of generous tuition charge waivers and bursary funding to all eligible students. All those first-degree Home/EU undergraduate students starting full-time courses on or after 2012 who would otherwise be liable for a £9k fee will be eligible for a tuition charge waiver from Oxford if their household income is less than £25,000.

<b>EFFECTIVE TUITION CHARGES FOR 2013 ENTRY AFTER WAIVERS, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS</b>		
<b>RHI</b>	<b>FIRST YEAR OF STUDY</b>	<b>SUBSEQUENT YEARS</b>
£0 - £16,000	£3,500	£6,000
£16,001 - £20,000	£7,000	£7,000
£20,001 - £25,000	£8,000	£8,000

19. Our tuition charge waivers are intended to reduce the risk that ‘debt aversion’ might deter students from low income backgrounds from applying. Research<sup>1</sup> suggests that debt aversion is most prominent amongst potential applicants from the lowest income households. Tuition charge waivers help mitigate this aversion by reducing the size of the loan from government that English students need to take out. Currently around one in ten Home/EU full-time undergraduate students at Oxford would benefit from the lowest level of tuition charge and the highest bursary.
20. Students following the six-year Medicine course who start their course in 2013-14 will be eligible for tuition charge waivers in the first four years of their course, depending on their household income. Graduate students following the four-year accelerated Medicine course will be eligible for tuition charge waivers in their first year of their course, depending on their household income. The effective fee is shown in the table below.
21. The standard fee for Home and EU PGCE students starting their full-time course in 2013-14 will be £9,000. They will be eligible for tuition charge waivers, depending on their household income. The effective fee is shown in the table below. We estimate that the expenditure on tuition charge waivers for PGCE students will be approximately £220k, on the assumption that 80 of our 189 students have household incomes of £25,000 or less. Our income from PGCE fees will therefore be approximately £1.48m rather than £1.70m. This means that approximately 39% of our income over £6,000 (£570k) will be spent on financial support, which is in excess of the 10% expected by OFFA for ITT programmes.

<b>EFFECTIVE TUITION CHARGES FOR 2013 ENTRY, AFTER WAIVERS, PGCE STUDENTS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS FOLLOWING THE FOUR YEAR ACCELERATED MEDICINE COURSE</b>	
<b>RHI</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE FEE</b>
£0 - £16,000	£6,000
£16,001 - £20,000	£7,000
£20,001 - £25,000	£8,000

<sup>1</sup> H. Pennell and A. West (2005) ‘The impact of increased fees on participation in higher education in England’, *Higher Education Quarterly*, 59, pp 127-37; P. Davies, K. Slack, A. Hughes, J. Mangan and K. Vigurs (2008), *Knowing where to study? Fees, bursaries and fair access* (Institute for Higher Educational Policy Research and Institute for Access Studies, Staffordshire University).

22. The standard year abroad fee for Home and EU undergraduates is £4,500. Students from households with incomes of £25,000 or less will be eligible for the tuition charge waivers shown below.<sup>2</sup>

<b>YEAR ABROAD CHARGES FOR 2013 ENTRANTS, AFTER WAIVERS</b>	
<b>RHI</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE FEE</b>
£0 - £16,000	£3,000
£16,001 - £20,000	£3,500
£20,001 - £25,000	£4,000

23. The University offers a full-time undergraduate certificate and diploma course in Theological and Pastoral Studies. These are the only full-time certificate and diploma level courses offered by the University. The standard fee for first degree Home and EU students studying in 2013-14 will be £7,350. Full-time students will be eligible for tuition charge waivers according to household income as follows:

<b>FULL-TIME CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA CHARGES FOR STUDY IN 2013-14, AFTER WAIVERS</b>	
<b>RHI</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE FEE</b>
£0 - £16,000	£4,900
£16,001 - £20,000	£5,717
£20,001 - £25,000	£6,533

24. The fee for students who started studying the two-year diploma course in 2013-14 will rise with inflation in 2014-15, and the tuition charge waivers will be adjusted pro-rata.
25. The University will seek to amend its fees on an annual basis in line with government legislation for the 2013-14 cohort.

<sup>2</sup> This fee level is subject to change, dependent upon whether the necessary government legislation is passed to limit the year abroad fee to £1,350. If this legislation is passed, the University will submit a revised access Agreement including these changes. Students would not be eligible for the tuition charge waivers shown above and the standard year abroad fee for Home and EU undergraduates commencing their studies in 2013-14 and undertaking a year abroad in 2014-15 would be £1,350. The same standard year abroad fee would apply for Home and EU undergraduates commencing their studies in 2012-13 and undertaking a year abroad in 2014-15 or beyond.

## 2. Bursary support for students in 2013-14

26. The University and colleges will provide the following bursaries to students<sup>3</sup>:

- A bursary of £3,300 to students from household incomes of less than £16,000 in each year of their course
- A tapered bursary from £3,000 to £500 for students from household incomes of £16,001 to £42,611; and
- An additional start-up bursary of £1,000 to students from household incomes of less than £16,000, and of £500 to students from household incomes of £16,001 to £42,611.
- Students require funds up-front to cover the cost of living. Through the provision of bursaries to supplement government loans and grants, students from the lowest household income backgrounds will be able to cover in full their living costs in Oxford, enabling them to take part in the many additional opportunities which Oxford has to offer. This should also help to maintain Oxford's very high retention rates (see paragraph 84). We estimate that students from households with incomes of less than £16,000 will be able to reduce the amount of government maintenance loan they take out by up to £2,000. Bursaries will be funded jointly by the University and by the colleges largely from philanthropic sources and from endowment income.

BURSARY PROVISION IN 2013-14	
RESIDUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME	BURSARY LEVEL P.A.
£0 - £16,000	£3,300
£16,001 - £20,000	£3,000
£20,001 - £25,000	£2,500
£25,001 - £30,000	£2,000
£30,001 - £35,000	£1,500
£35,001 - £40,000	£1,000
£40,001 - £42,611	£500

<sup>3</sup> The maintenance bursaries described here will be available to students settled in the UK and ordinarily resident in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and to EU nationals ordinarily resident in the EEA or Switzerland.

27. Oxford terms are intensive. A survey by HEPI<sup>4</sup> shows that students at Oxford and Cambridge spend a significantly greater proportion of their time studying than those at all other HEIs. The University and colleges strongly discourage students from taking part-time work during term, and expect them to do extensive reading out of term time. Maintenance bursaries ensure that students from the lowest household incomes can apply themselves to academic work without having to take paid employment during term time.
28. Students following the six-year Medicine course who start their course in 2013-14 will be eligible for a bursary in all years of their course, depending on their household income. Students following the four-year accelerated Medicine course for graduates who started their course in 2013-14 will be eligible for a bursary in all years of their course, according to the rates for undergraduate students after the first year of their course. These proposed arrangements assume that the 2012 entry NHS funding arrangements will continue for 2013 entry Medicine students.
29. The University will take into account all forms of government support that PGCE students are eligible for, including Teaching Agency (TA) bursaries. If a PGCE student has a household income of less than £42,611 and is eligible for government support (including maintenance grants, loans, and TA bursaries) of less than £9,000, it is anticipated that Oxford will provide a bursary according to the rates for undergraduate students after the first year of their course. However, the University will need to fully consider its response to the funding of PGCE students once the 2013-14 Teaching Agency funding arrangements have been confirmed.
30. Full-time students following the certificate and diploma courses in Theological and Pastoral Studies starting their course in 2013-14 will be eligible for an Oxford bursary, at the rates for other undergraduate students after the first year of their course.
31. The University will continue to provide the Oxford Opportunity Bursary (OOB) to students who commenced their studies in 2011 or before. This support will be available to students with home fee status who are studying for their first undergraduate degree, a PGCE course or undertaking the first year of the Graduate Entry Medicine course. The University will maintain bursary support at current levels in 2013.
32. In addition to the bursaries listed above, students may be eligible for a wide range of generous financial support from colleges and departments, which will augment these core provisions.

---

<sup>4</sup> *The academic experience of students in English universities* (September 2007).

### 3a. Additional access measures: outreach

33. The University of Oxford and its colleges undertake a wide range of outreach activity to support the aim of attracting students from all backgrounds. We seek to attract the most able candidates regardless of their background (paragraph 128). Our outreach activity is delivered by a central team, along with staff in colleges, faculties, departments, Oxford's world-class museums, and student organisations. In the last five years, this activity has become increasingly coordinated and targeted to relevant groups. In 2010-11 we spent about £1.90m on access and outreach activity. In the current academic year this spending has increased to £2.44m as colleges and departments have invested heavily in outreach staff and activity.
34. A Common Framework for Access is currently being developed, to sit alongside the existing Common Framework for Undergraduate Admissions. This framework aims to encourage greater dissemination and awareness of access and other outreach activity across the collegiate University, stimulating discussion and research into the field, encouraging good practice, and providing evidence on the range and effectiveness of access activity carried out in Oxford. This framework will be in place by December 2012.
35. In 2012 the first Access Showcase was launched at Oxford. A joint initiative between OUSU and the Undergraduate Admissions Office, this profiled the breadth and variety of outreach work taking place at Oxford through colleges, departments, student bodies and the administration.
36. In recent years Oxford's focus has been on increasing the number of competitive applications from the UK maintained sector. The flagship programmes for this work are the UNIQ summer schools, teacher information activity, and the national schools and the college regional link programme, all of which are delivered in partnership between colleges and the University.
37. The University also supports increased participation in further and higher education generally. Efforts have therefore also been directed at encouraging participation amongst local pre-GCSE students, with no expectation that this will necessarily result in them applying to Oxford.
38. The significant financial resource committed to outreach activity has been underpinned by systemic evaluation and assessment of its effectiveness. Programmes have been designed to take into account of experience gathered at Oxford and other universities, and through the work of Aimhigher, thus ensuring that best practice is embedded in existing and new activity.

39. Our intention is to build upon the existing activity which has been demonstrated to be successful. The University will seek to ensure that by 2016-17 we have made progress in relation to a number of targets, outlined in paragraphs 96-127.
40. The information in the next sections of this Agreement describes current activity, and outlines the context for the further targeting and development of activity which has been undertaken in the last academic year.

### **(i) Focus of access and outreach activity**

41. Outreach activity at Oxford falls within two categories with distinct but overlapping aims: widening access to Oxford and widening participation in higher education. The aim of widening access activity is to convert students from under-represented groups who have the ability to study here into successful applicants. Widening participation activity promotes progression to further and higher education institutions, including other leading selective universities.

### **(ii) Widening access to Oxford**

#### ***UNIQ summer schools***

42. In 2010 Oxford, with support from the Helsington Foundation, developed the **UNIQ summer schools** for UK state-educated students. This is a collaborative activity between colleges and the University. Participants are selected using verifiable contextual information. This includes the students' GCSE A\* performance compared with their school average attainment, their ACORN (A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods) socio-economic post code group, their school's history of sending students to Oxford and their care history if appropriate. A personal statement is also a key part of the application and provides a valuable preparatory activity for students' subsequent UCAS applications.
43. In 2011 3,400 applications were received for 657 summer school places across 25 academic subject strands. 444 UNIQ participants subsequently applied to Oxford and 185 have been made conditional offers.

44. Information from 2010 is shown for comparison purposes.

	2010	Conversion rate at each stage from UNIQ application to Oxford offer	2011	Conversion rate at each stage from UNIQ application to Oxford offer
Applications to UNIQ	3,644		3,400	
Places offered on UNIQ	507	13.9%	657	19.3%
Applications to Oxford by UNIQ attendees	347	68.4%	444	67.6%
Conditional offers made to UNIQ attendees	137	39.5%	185	41.7%
Confirmed offers to UNIQ attendees	132	96.4%	tbc <sup>5</sup>	

45. This can be compared with the 2009 Sutton Trust Summer School at Oxford which involved 387 participants on 14 different subject courses and resulted in 202 applications to Oxford (a 53% application rate), of whom 53 were made offers (26% of those who applied). That means that 14% of all Sutton Trust summer school participants received offers from Oxford.
46. 19.5% of UNIQ offer holders came from the most socio-economically disadvantaged postcodes (Acorn groups 4 and 5 as detailed in target 2); 21.6% from low progression neighbourhoods (POLAR quintiles 1 and 2 as detailed in target 3); 20.3% from schools where very few students achieve 3 A grades at A level each year, and 82.6% from schools with a history of limited success in applying to Oxford. When compared with data from the 2010 summer schools, this is a strong indicator that this initiative is proving highly successful in promoting access to Oxford from under-represented groups from within the maintained sector.
47. The 2012 UNIQ summer schools will involve 748 participants on 28 subject strands. The University plans to expand the UNIQ summer schools programme to increase capacity until 2014, when it will have doubled the original cohort to 1,000 participants, with all subject areas available at Oxford represented on the programme.
48. In addition the University supports candidates who are not successful in obtaining a UNIQ summer schools place by providing alternative opportunities in conjunction with

<sup>5</sup> This will be supplied in August 2012 when A- levels results are released and conditional offers are confirmed.

departments and colleges. In 2011, 76 students benefited from an alternative activity. 183 students will benefit from an alternative opportunity in 2012.

### ***Engagement with teachers***

49. The 2012 MORI Teachers' Survey on behalf of the Sutton Trust indicated that only 44% of those surveyed would recommend that their most able students should apply to Oxford or Cambridge, a 6% decrease from a similar survey conducted in 2007. Other evidence has pointed in the same direction. The University and its colleges have therefore invested considerable resource in developing a range of activities to engage both new and experienced teachers in promoting access and encouraging participation in higher education.
50. In 2008-9, Oxford piloted a series of **Regional Teacher Conferences** across the UK with support from the Helsington Foundation. The successful outcome resulted in receipt of additional funding from the Helsington Foundation to provide further conferences through to 2014. The seven annual one-day conferences are run at a range of locations nationally, and locations are varied, to ensure national coverage, every two years. Typically each year the teacher conferences attract almost 500 participating teachers and guidance advisers, who receive a briefing on all aspects of the admissions process, along with guidance on how best to identify and support their most academically able students.
51. The University has an agreed target with OFFA through to 2011-12 relating to the Regional Teacher Conference outcomes. This target will continue to be applied in 2012-13 and subsequent access Agreements. Further details are given at paragraph 115.
52. The University introduced a teachers' e-newsletter in September 2008, which communicates admissions, access and funding news – and promotes events for teachers and schools – to around 2,500 teachers across the country six times per year.

### ***Working with schools and colleges***

53. The University and its colleges conduct an extensive range of school and college visits each year and maintain a database to record all this activity across Oxford. In 2010-11 Oxford conducted over 2,000 activities, involving over 3,000 schools and colleges in the UK. This is a 27% increase in activity from 2009-10, largely due to the increasing success of Oxford's regional link programme (paragraph 55). This engagement will continue to develop, and as evidence builds of the most effective methods of

supporting students and teachers, the work will be adapted so that it provides the best possible support.

54. The vast majority of our outreach to schools is aimed at the maintained sector, in particular at those schools and colleges with significant numbers of students who have the attainment required by Oxford but do not have a strong track record of making applications to the University. Other activities, such as the Regional Student Conferences and UCAS HE fairs, provide information to all students considering an application to Oxford.
55. A **regional link programme** has been developed, to ensure that each geographical local authority region is supported by a named Oxford college, and that schools and colleges within that region have a clear first point of contact with Oxford. Over 60% of school visits in 2010-11 were conducted by college outreach and academic staff. We encourage collaboration between schools which have significant experience of supporting applicants into selective courses and other local schools and colleges with limited knowledge of Oxford. An example of this collaborative working is the Reading Cluster Group, involving eight schools and facilitated by the link college. Another approach is the Pem-Brooke Access Scheme, where Pembroke College in Oxford has based a tutor at Brooke House (B6) Sixth Form College in Hackney to run curriculum enrichment activity in a sustained manner. Applications to Brooke House have quadrupled since 2008 and the number of students winning places at Russell Group universities has increased by 333%. The first successful Oxbridge students took their places in 2010 and applications to Oxford have also risen significantly.
56. Oxford currently collaborates with **Cambridge University** to run a series of eight annual one- and two-day regional Student Conferences across the UK. These free events typically attract over 10,000 potential applicants in year 12 (or Scottish S5) students and their teachers and guidance advisers, and aim to give an insight into the courses available at both universities. The two universities also provide an element of cross-training to ensure that staff at either institution are able to explain the similarities and differences between the two, including admissions processes and course structures.
57. A group of colleges have established the **Pathways Programme** on behalf of the collegiate University. This longitudinal programme offers activities for students in years 10 – 13 and specifically targets students from schools with little history of engagement with Oxford. In 2011-12 436 year 12 students attended a study day in Oxford and almost 600 year 10 students and 130 accompanying teachers attended a taster day. Almost all colleges at Oxford have contributed to this programme through provision of

accommodation, resources, staff and catering. Funding from the Sutton Trust has been secured to embed and develop the year 12 and 13 elements of the Pathways programme in 2012-13 and beyond.

### **(iii) Widening participation in higher education**

58. Within our local region Oxford's work concentrates on supporting pre-16 year olds and their families. Our focus reflects the geographical boundary of the former Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Aimhigher Partnership, in which Oxford was an active participant. The University has enjoyed a close working relationship with Oxford Brookes University and with Bucks New University. We will deliver a joint IAG conference with these partners under the Study Higher programme in June 2012 for year 7-9 teachers and guidance advisers. This is a new activity, which may be repeated in future years, pending evaluation of the pilot event. This has resulted in the establishment of a joint Memorandum of Understanding on local partnership working. The universities are working together to share best practice, offer multi-site visits and to avoid duplication of activity in the region. This helps to ensure that the legacy of successful Aimhigher initiatives is retained and developed, particularly in the areas of pre-16 attainment and aspiration-raising.
59. The **Oxford Young Ambassadors (OYA)** scheme is set to run for three years from 2010-11. In the initial year (2010-11) twenty year 8 students predicted to achieve B grades at GCSE (using Fischer Family Trust data), and who will be first generation entrants to higher education, were selected to participate in the programme. A second cohort of thirty students commenced the programme in 2011-12. OYA works through a series of activities that run with each cohort over a three-year period. They are designed to raise the participants' attainment to A and A\* grades at GCSE, the level of attainment typically used by selective university courses in their admissions processes. A key part of the programme is that the students and their parents serve as advocates for the scheme in their schools and communities.
60. The first graduating cohort of OYA will be those achieving their GCSEs in 2012-13. The scheme is being monitored by an independent research consultant who has considerable experience of Aimhigher and who will assess impact and advise on the development of the scheme's content.
61. The University also has developed an extensive programme of activity for students in upper primary (years 5 and 6) to prepare them for the transition to secondary school, with over thirty visits to primary schools in Oxford in 2011-12. The activity is embedded in the Key Stage 2 curriculum, and introduces the concept of higher education to primary school students as part of the programme.

62. The COMPASS Programme, a sustained contact programme aimed at local year 10 and 11 students with care responsibilities, provides a series of thirteen workshops over a two-year period aimed at building confidence, developing study skills, and raising awareness about progression routes beyond the age of sixteen. The activity includes a period of residential study at Oxford.
63. As a university with global reach and reputation, Oxford places a high value on diversity among its overall student population, which is currently made up of people from over 140 different nationalities, accounting for more than one in five of all our students. In a UK context, the University works intensively with partner organisations to promote the value and importance of higher education to pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. We believe that the targets in this agreement have the potential to increase access to Oxford for candidates from such backgrounds. Activity is planned with Generating Genius, and joint discussions with Cambridge are planned with Rare Recruitment, who have initiated the Target Oxbridge programme.
64. Oxford recognises the importance of promoting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects to young people from an early age, to ensure that students are supported in choosing the right combination of subjects which would allow them to apply for STEM courses at university. A number of the University's specialist outreach staff work with schools to engage teachers and to provide outreach activities for students at primary and secondary levels. Activities include an Oxfordshire Science Roadshow for children and families, and a series of Christmas science lectures. To encourage an increase in undergraduate applications to Oxford by women, the Maths, Physics and Life Sciences division runs the 'Women in Science' residential course for local sixth form students in conjunction with Jesus College, and all STEM departments are committed to achieve an Athena SWAN award by 2014. Research students and academic staff also participate in a range of science outreach events, such as Marcus's Marvellous Mathemagicians, a series of student-run workshops designed to introduce school pupils to new and interesting applications of maths; Accelerate!, a live science show which introduces children from year 7 upwards to particle physics and accelerator physics; Oxford Robot Games, a Computer Science activity day for year 10 students; and the Big Bang UK Young Scientists' and Engineers' Fair. Additional outreach activities develop understanding of the full range of subjects offered by the University.
65. The University also recognises the importance of supporting those entering the teaching profession, and provides briefing sessions for its **Teach First** and **PGCE students**. Participants receive a briefing from Oxford staff on current issues in HE admissions and student funding, and updates on the UCAS admissions process. The

sessions examine how Teach First and PGCE students can offer information, advice and guidance to students who are considering applying to competitive universities and courses, and to enable teachers to support students through the admissions process. The events typically attract 150 students per year, and are run annually. The University intends to embed this programme into PGCE training at Oxford to ensure that new teachers are made aware of the current issues related to admission to higher education generally and to Oxford. This is a cost-effective model which could be incorporated into PGCE courses across the UK.

66. The University's **Department of Education** has a long-established partnership with Oxfordshire and some Buckinghamshire state secondary schools as the basis for its highly rated PGCE. It is currently revising the partnership structure to ensure stronger links with schools, to support the continuing professional development of teachers and to engage teachers in research aimed at school development. In another initiative it is helping to strengthen the Oxford City Learning Partnership, a network of state-funded educational providers, which aims at improving the life chances of students in Oxford's schools.

### *Partnerships with other universities and organisations*

67. Oxford will continue its strong record of supporting conferences organised by other UK universities aimed at informing teachers and guidance advisers of admissions and access issues. In the last year Oxford staff have provided sessions at events organised by **Anglia Ruskin University, Bradford University, the University of East Anglia, Essex University, Exeter University, Glamorgan University, University of Manchester, and the University of Northamptonshire**. Outreach staff from the Universities of Bangor, Bristol, Glamorgan and University Campus Suffolk are also attending the regional teacher conferences to better understand the admissions processes used by Oxford.
68. In addition to the local Study Higher partnership with Oxford Brookes and Bucks New University, the University is collaborating with the University of Bath and the University of Liverpool to provide visit opportunities for students participating in the Oxford Young Ambassador Scheme (and reciprocal visits for participants on their pre-16 outreach programmes), and with the University of Winchester on joint activity in relation to the COMPASS young carers programme.
69. Oxford has been a very strong and active supporter of **Teach First**. In addition to the provision for Teach First teachers mentioned earlier, Oxford contributes to the Teach First HEAPS (Higher Education Access Programme for Schools), providing an Oxford taster day for over 200 year 12 students and participating in an information day for

parents of Year 12 HEAPS students. Oxford's colleges also give significant support to graduates participating in Teach First by providing bursaries to support them during the summer training programme.

70. Oxford holds the 'Buttle UK Quality Mark for Care Leavers', which demonstrates our commitment to students who are currently, or have been, in the care system. We recognise the very specific challenges that this group may face in progressing to higher education, and have considered the needs of care leavers in every aspect of our admissions process, from outreach activity through to on course support.
71. The University also supports the work of the **Social Mobility Foundation**, collaborating with Cambridge to run an admissions briefing and interview session for those students applying to either of the universities in the weeks before the Oxford and Cambridge interviews.
72. Oxford has been an active supporter of the Higher Education Liaison Officers' Association (HELOA), the professional body which supports initiatives and training for UK outreach and access staff in higher education. From 2007-2012, Oxford has provided four members of the National Executive Committee (National Chair, National Treasurer, South East England Group Chair, and National Secretary), as well as supporting the national Conference through running training sessions, which we are keen to continue supporting in future years. The University remains committed to supporting the work of HELOA, particularly as an engine for developing UK-wide initiatives on providing information and guidance to prospective applicants, their parents and guidance advisers.

#### **(iv) Widening participation in Initial Teacher Training**

73. Oxford is concerned to ensure that the cohort it recruits to its initial teacher training courses is representative of the diverse population served by our schools. Efforts have focused on ethnic diversity and access for candidates with disabilities.
74. The proportion of BME (black and minority ethnic) students in the PGCE cohort has increased substantially in the last ten years, such that we now consistently achieve one of the highest proportions in the south-east region (outside London). In the last two years we have contributed substantially to the funding of a project with the majority of the ITT providers in the south-east region to promote the recruitment and retention of black and minority ethnic ITT students.
75. Candidates with disabilities are encouraged to declare them at an early stage to ensure that support and guidance can be provided as soon as possible. A dyslexia

screening test is offered to all new PGCE students, and a programme of information sessions for course tutors has been put in place.

#### **(iv) Future developments in access and outreach**

76. In our 2012-13 Agreement, we indicated that we intended to spend across the University and its colleges up to £0.75m in additional co-ordinated and carefully targeted access and outreach work in support of our targets for widening access to Oxford. We are still finalising budgets for 2012-13 but we can report that in 2011-12 we have already increased OFFA-countable expenditure on outreach by £0.27m, and provisional budgets for 2012-13 provide for a further increase of £0.27m. The total increase in OFFA-countable outreach expenditure between the baseline of 2010-11 and 2012-13 is £0.54m. These measures have already included significant investment in outreach staff in colleges and departments, and will also focus on the assessment of effectiveness of the measures described in this Agreement; and the provision of extended guidance and advice (particularly on financial matters) to prospective applicants and their parents and schools.
77. Oxford's resource-intensive admissions process is focussed on identifying an applicant's ability and potential. Applicants are carefully assessed against a range of criteria, including their UCAS application, GCSE results, contextual information about school background, subject-specific aptitude tests, written work, and (if they are short-listed) at least two and up to four interviews.
78. Our guiding principle is that admissions decisions will be made by academic staff who will normally teach the candidates they admit, and that their decisions will be based on academic factors, with the aim of admitting the best candidates in each subject rather than meeting predetermined quotas of students from particular backgrounds. It is fundamental to our approach that all candidates who successfully apply to Oxford should know that they have been admitted on the basis of their academic merit and potential for highly intensive undergraduate courses. The integrity of our admissions process contributes to our excellent retention rates, since the process rigorously identifies those best able to excel on the intense and demanding courses we offer.
79. Our approach to admissions is necessarily highly selective: it is geared towards identifying the best 3,200 candidates from a highly talented applicant pool of over 17,000, of whom about 12,000 are UK nationals. Almost all of these will be predicted a minimum of three A grades at A-level (or equivalent), and will be drawn from a national pool of some 42,000 achieving three As, or equivalent requirements for students undertaking the International Baccalaureate, Scottish Highers or alternative qualifications. It is thus inevitable that, each year, Oxford will be turning away

thousands of candidates who are capable of achieving at least three As (or equivalent) at A-level. Unsuccessful candidates will include a large number who will achieve at least one or more A\*s at A-level. In 2011 for example, there were 5,348 applicants who did not receive an offer but who nevertheless went on to achieve at least A\*AA grades. Of those who were accepted to Oxford for 2010 entry, 85% achieved A\*AA or higher, and 37% achieved A\*A\*A\*.

80. The University has also developed the use of admissions aptitude tests in many subjects to supplement the information gained from national examinations. The tests are designed to stretch an applicant and identify aptitude for their chosen subject linked to the published selection criteria for the course. The tests are one part of the process used to shortlist candidates for interview, and are useful in the access context because they depend less on the influence of prior educational support.
81. The University has been using evidence-based approaches to contextual information in the admissions process since the 2008-9 admissions cycle. A common system of flagging applications has been adopted by all courses to enable tutors to identify candidates who have experienced educational or socio-economic disadvantage. This ensures that applications from these groups are given especially careful consideration at the interview shortlisting stage.
82. Following a review of contextual information carried out in 2009-10, Oxford in conjunction with the University of Manchester has adopted an approach which is based on a candidate's residential post-code, as well as school or college performance at both GCSE and post-16, and therefore places additional emphasis on students who come from backgrounds which indicate both educational and socio-economic disadvantage. Candidates who apply from care backgrounds (looked-after children) receive particular attention, and are highlighted specifically in the application process for additional consideration by tutors. In 2011-12 a flag for applicants from low participation neighbourhoods was also introduced, and for 2012 entry a further flag will be introduced for applicants from schools and colleges which historically have had limited progression to Oxford.
83. Interviews with potential tutors are a key part of the Oxford application process. They test the extent to which applicants are able to engage in academic discussion about the proposed subject of study, and they enable tutors to gauge aptitude and potential. Interviewers are able to make allowance for the different kinds of teaching and preparation which students will have experienced in their prior education. The outcomes are carefully collated and taken into account alongside other evidence

before final decisions to offer a place are made. All academic tutors new to Oxford are required to complete an online training course on interviewing.

### **3b. Additional access measures: student retention, success, and employability**

84. Oxford already provides one of the most supportive and personalised student experiences in the world. As a result, Oxford has one of the highest retention rates (98%) and highest rates of student satisfaction (93%) in the country. We are highly successful in supporting our students whilst on their course and into further study and employment. Oxford's colleges provide academic communities in which students from diverse backgrounds flourish. As well as teaching, students receive close monitoring and feedback in their colleges and departments on a holistic basis. Students have access to extensive welfare provision and co-curricular activities within colleges. Each college offers an extensive network of welfare services, ranging from student peer group support, to advisers, chaplains and counsellors, and has a doctor and a nurse associated with it.
85. This provision is supported by coordinated services, where these can best be delivered university-wide, e.g. in the areas of careers, disability, counselling, financial guidance, and by the Student Union (OUSU). Oxford will continue to invest in the student experience and in those services which support it.
86. A pilot Bridging Programme has been developed by the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences division, to run in the summer of 2012. This will build on experience gained through the work undertaken by several subject departments and colleges in offering pre-sessional courses in particular subjects to successful candidates whose pre-university preparation may not necessarily have equipped them well for the demanding nature of an Oxford undergraduate degree course. This pilot is being supported by two colleges, St John's and Wadham, who are hosting the students at no cost.
87. The Student Counselling Service ensures that all students, regardless of their financial background, have equal access to specialised psychological therapy should they encounter difficulties while at Oxford. Its staff of counsellors, psychotherapists, clinical psychologists and a consultant psychiatrist are expert in helping students to negotiate the transition to Oxford and to meet the challenge of reconciling competing demands that arise from cultural, family or class contexts. As well as individual work with students, it has a comprehensive programme of workshops with elements targeted at specific groups of students who might find Oxford particularly challenging, such as

those who have suffered bereavement in relation to significant family members, who have debilitating examination anxiety, or who have experienced depression.

88. Oxford University Student Union works to improve the student experience at Oxford. The University works closely with the Student Union to develop mechanisms which allow students to shape their own experiences of Oxford and maintain a student community which is both diverse and supportive. OUSU runs the Student Advice Service which offers impartial and independent advice, support and advocacy to all students. Through its six elected sabbatical officers, the Student Union represents students on all issues to the University. The University regards constructive engagement with the Student Union as a fundamental priority in developing its student retention and support work.
89. All potential students are rightly focused on the academic outcomes of their chosen course of study. We also know, however, that they (and their parents/carers) are increasingly mindful of the opportunities for further study and employment available to them after graduation. Oxford already provides unparalleled opportunities for students to develop themselves for later life and a recent survey shows that employers rate Oxford students 'better or much better' than average UK students. Oxford's graduates are highly successful across most fields of human endeavour and across the globe. Keys to this success are the experience, transferable skills and attributes developed through their course and in the many other opportunities available to students from all backgrounds in student clubs, societies, sport, or student representation.
90. The University Careers Service runs a wide range of activities to provide all students with the opportunity to discuss their career plans, add more transferable 'employability skills', meet employers, and apply for hundreds of internships and full-time, permanent vacancies. Over 85% of finalist undergraduates are engaged with activities organised by the Careers Service. The Careers Service has advisers who are fully trained in assisting students with physical disabilities or specific learning difficulties. The Service's Ability Works programme assists students with disabilities in applying for jobs and with advice on disclosing their condition. Advisers see all students on a personal basis, not only at the Careers Service but also in their college or department, which is particularly helpful for those with mobility concerns.
91. The Careers Service facilitates an increasing number of placement and internship opportunities, with alumni often playing a crucial role in creating and funding these opportunities. For example, this year the Oxford University International Internship Programme (OUIIP) will provide externally funded opportunities for over 120 students to work with alumni of the University in a wide range of projects across the globe from

USA to China, from Malawi to Denmark. The Oxford Student Consultancy (OSC) facilitates opportunities for teams of students to work with local third sector organisations on projects lasting one term which develop solutions for real business issues. Like OUIIP, OSC charges no fees and the programme is open to all students. Oxford will continue to expand the range of such programmes, and will make further investments where necessary to ensure that such career-enhancing opportunities are available regardless of students' background and financial circumstances.

92. We recognise the need to provide clear and accessible information to applicants and students, especially regarding the costs of study at Oxford and the financial support available to those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Oxford has already made significant investments in this area. For example, the University has created the 'Student Gateway' via its website which provides easily accessible information and advice to all students. Particular attention has been given to ensuring that the processes Oxford uses, and Oxford itself, are demystified, and to enabling sources of college and university support to be readily identified. We will continue to develop this area, to ensure that the provision of generic information is enhanced, with the ability for students to be routed effectively to sources of specialist information where more specific advice is required. Colleges' websites provide information on the specific support they provide. A welcome development has been the facility to link current students with prospective students via email and messaging so that a relationship with fellow students and the college begins well before the student arrives. The Careers Service website lists details of first destination of graduates, six months after leaving – split by college, department and gender. Details include average starting salary, location and employer names.
93. In our 2012-13 Agreement, we indicated that we intended to spend across the University and its colleges up to £0.75m (of which we estimated that £0.25m would be spent on students covered by this agreement) in additional student support initiatives. We are still finalising budgets for 2012-13 but we can report that in 2011-12 we have already increased OFFA-countable expenditure in this area by £0.16m, and provisional budgets for 2012-13 provide for a further increase of £0.04m. The total increase in OFFA-countable student support expenditure between the baseline of 2010-11 and 2012-13 is therefore £0.19m.

### 3c. Expenditure on current and additional activities

ACTIVITY	OFFA-countable	Not OFFA-countable	Total
<i>Outreach</i>			
Baseline expenditure in 2010-11	£1.90m	£2.10m	£4.01m
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-12 and 2012-13	£0.54m	-£0.02m	£0.51m
Expenditure in 2013-14	£2.44m	£2.08m	£4.52m
<i>Retention, support and employability (including monitoring and evaluation)</i>			
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-12 and 2012-13	£0.19m	£0.22m	£0.41m
<i>Financial Support</i>			
Bursaries (including cohorts on pre-2012 entry scheme, and two cohorts on post-2012 entry scheme)	£6.50m		£6.50m
Tuition charge waivers (first and second year of scheme only)	£2.90m		£2.90m
Less NSP allocation for 2013-14	-£0.79m		-£0.79m
<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENDITURE in 2013/14:</b>	<b>£11.24m</b>	<b>£2.30m</b>	<b>£13.54m</b>

94. Once the Government's allocation for the National Scholarship Programme of £0.79m has been subtracted, additional expenditure in 2013-14 as defined in the OFFA guidance is estimated to be up to £11.24m. Additional expenditure as a proportion of the University's tuition charge revenue (£27.0 m), taking account of the 'higher' fee appropriate to each cohort, will be approximately 42% (as against the expectation in the guidance of 35%). We note that the present Agreement covers students admitted in the academic year 2013-14. For subsequent cohorts, we shall review total spend and the balance of spending between the various measures, including the balance between tuition charge waivers, bursaries, outreach, access and student support, in the light of evidence of their respective impacts and effectiveness.
95. The figures above include support for students ordinarily resident in the UK and the rest of the EU. The figures also include expenditure on bursaries and tuition charge waivers for PGCE students.

## 4. Targets and outcomes

### *Our principles and our approach*

96. We have set our targets as the desired outcomes of the full range of our access and outreach activities as described above. Each target is tailored to reflect the outcome of specified activities. However, we do not see the targets as ends in themselves, and we know that there are factors beyond our control which may impact on the outcomes of our activity. Where appropriate we have included milestones to allow us to monitor our progress.
97. Our package of financial support to undergraduate students, through both tuition charge waivers and maintenance bursaries, is expected to contribute in broad terms to meeting the targets and outcomes. As yet, however, the evidence for a demonstrable connection between financial support for students and improvements in access to higher education amongst under-represented groups is unclear. We will continue to review our position on the basis of further evidence and analysis.
98. Against this background, the targets and associated outcomes that we are proposing are designed to ensure:
- That all those candidates who may have the potential to benefit from an Oxford education, and who can demonstrate a certain level of prior attainment, are encouraged to apply. They should have available full information about the University and the courses it offers, and the financial support available to them. This involves working with schools and colleges which may have little track record of putting forward successful applications to Oxford, and ensuring that able students from disadvantaged backgrounds are encouraged to apply.
  - Once they have applied, that our admissions processes are tailored to identify potential as well as prior attainment. Our admissions procedures are designed to ensure that those who come from less advantaged backgrounds are given every opportunity to demonstrate their qualities in the admissions process. This will ensure that those who have benefited from strong support from their schools or their parents are not unfairly advantaged. The use of aptitude tests and a series of personal interviews with tutors contribute towards this outcome.

***Target 1: increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from schools and colleges which historically have had limited progression to Oxford***

99. At present there are approximately 39,000 students in the UK who achieve AAA grades at A-level (excluding General Studies) annually. Oxford's first target aims to ensure that as many as possible of such students actively consider applying, and that more of them are accepted from schools and colleges with limited attainment of AAA grades, or with little applicant success in securing offers.
100. There are approximately 4,300 schools and colleges in the UK with post-16 provision<sup>6</sup> of which around 3,650 offer A-levels. Using historic UCAS data we estimate that in any one year up to 1,680 of these will not have a student who achieves AAA grades, but over a three-year period they may produce a maximum of two AAA candidates. Eligible students from these schools are encouraged to apply for our UNIQ summer schools (see paragraphs 42-48) to give such students the best chance of gaining confidence and knowledge of Oxford; and we will make sure that where a student at such a school has the potential to make a competitive application, appropriate information and support is available to facilitate this.
101. There is in addition a group of schools where over a three-year period there will be up to 30 students achieving AAA grades, and a group of colleges with more than 30 students achieving AAA grades, but where the success rate for an application to Oxford is below 10%. Analysis of UCAS data for the three-year period 2007-9 shows that there were on average 1,175 such schools and colleges in this position. We aim to make particular efforts to target access and outreach work on these schools and colleges, since they educate significant numbers of students who should be able to make a competitive application to Oxford, but are currently not doing so.
102. There is no existing annual HEFCE benchmark or target for this area, so we have constructed our own. The University will set a challenging target based on its own historic analysis. In 2010, 21.5% of our UK-accepted applicants were from this group of 2,855 schools, FE and Sixth Form Colleges, so by 2016-17 the University aims to increase the number of UK-accepted applicants from this group to 25%. To assess our progress a milestone of a 0.5% increase a year is expected, and this will be reported through our annual undergraduate admissions statistical release.

---

<sup>6</sup> Data derived from UCAS centres list, filtered to include institutions based in the UK and registered as schools or colleges.

## ***Target 2: increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds***

103. This target is based on analysis of the ACORN dataset which is used to determine socio-economic disadvantage at postcode level. The University has found the ACORN information to be the most accurate source of verifiable information to highlight socio-economic factors that may signify disadvantage, and has used it as a contextual flag in the undergraduate admissions process since 2008-9, and also as a factor when selecting participants for the UNIQ summer schools programmes.
104. There is no HEFCE benchmark or target for this group, so the University will set its own target using the historical evidence gained over the last three admissions cycles, in which socio-economic disadvantage has been a flagged characteristic in the admissions process.
105. UK applicants from ACORN postcodes 4 and 5 are currently flagged in the undergraduate admissions process, and 7.6% of accepted applicants to Oxford came from these postcodes in 2010-11.
106. Looking at the existing pool of applicants, we believe an appropriate target would be to have 9% of accepted UK applicants from ACORN 4 and 5 households by 2016-17. Progress towards this target will be reported in the annual undergraduate admissions statistical release. To assess our progress a milestone of a 0.5% increase a year is expected, and this will be reported through our annual undergraduate admissions statistical release.

***Target 3: increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from neighbourhoods with low participation in higher education***

107. In line with HEFCE and OFFA recommendations, the University will focus efforts on students domiciled in postcodes which fall within POLAR 2 (Participation Of Local Areas, updated) quintiles 1 and 2, who represent the 40% of school leavers least likely to progress to higher education.
108. In 2011-12 the University added a flag for UK applicants from POLAR 2 quintiles 1 and 2, alongside the contextual falling of postcodes that identify socio-economic disadvantage. This identified 1,466 applicants who were from postcodes with limited progression to higher education, and assisted tutors in identifying candidates who could be short-listed for interview when considered alongside other contextual information.
109. Oxford will also begin more detailed analysis of students on the basis of the POLAR 2 data, and use this to target access activity more accurately to support students from quintile 1 and 2 postcodes. For 2011 entry 10.2% of accepted UK applicants at Oxford are from POLAR 2 groups 1 and 2.
110. Looking at the existing pool of applicants we believe an appropriate target would be to have 13% of accepted UK applicants from POLAR 2 quintiles 1 and 2 by 2016-17. To assess our progress a milestone of a 0.5% increase a year is expected, and this will be reported through our annual undergraduate admissions statistical release.

#### ***Target 4: meet the HEFCE Benchmark on disabled students at Oxford***

111. The University recognises that it has much to offer to students with disabilities because the tutorial education system and collegiate environment provide a tailored and supportive university experience.
112. The University will aim to continue to meet or exceed the benchmark on participation by students with a declared disability set by HEFCE (3.3%), and will continue to report the outcomes for students with disabilities in its annual undergraduate admissions statistical release. In the most recent year for which applicant data is available, the University reported that 5.7% of its undergraduate population was in receipt of a disabled student's allowance.

	Total full-time first degree students	Number in receipt of DSA	PI for Oxford (%)	Bench-mark (%)	Standard deviation (%)
2010-11	9,730	555	5.7	3.3	0.22
2009-10	9,890	355	3.6	2.9	0.20
2008-09	9,955	370	3.7	3.2	0.20
2007-08	9,925	214	2.2	2.6	0.17
2006-07	10,090	250	2.5	2.5	0.17

## ***Activity targets and outcomes***

113. In 2009-10, the target for the number of participants in the **UNIQ summer schools** who applied to Oxford was set at 60%; and the target for the number of participants who became Oxford offer holders was 20% or above. We expected at least 30% of students who applied to Oxford following the summer schools to receive a conditional offer. The baseline was developed from the outcome of the 2008-9 Sutton Trust summer residential at Oxford which resulted in a 53% application rate, of whom 26% were made offers: a total conversion from summer school participation to offers rate of 14%. In 2011, 657 students participated in the UNIQ summer schools, 444 made an application (an application rate of 67.5%), and 185 have been made conditional offers (a 28% participation to offer rate).
114. In 2013-14 the target percentages will continue to apply. Given the emphasis within the UNIQ selection criteria on identifying students from disadvantaged socio-economic or educational postcodes, and from schools and colleges with limited success in making applications to Oxford, there is a clear link between UNIQ and Targets 1, 2 and 3 in this access Agreement. After three years of trend information from UNIQ participants the University will assess whether the current targets need to be amended.
115. The University also established a target for the 2010-12 access Agreement for the success rates and number of students from schools and colleges who have representatives attending the **Regional Teacher Conferences**. The target was to raise participation, application and success levels through contact with teachers from schools and colleges either with low numbers of students attaining the grades necessary to make competitive applications, or where there is limited success in achieving offers where applicants currently do apply. The baseline was the 2007-8 admissions cycle (the year before the teacher conferences existed), when successful applicants from schools and colleges with limited experience or success in achieving offers stood at 15% and there were 70 successful applicants.
116. For 2012-13, the aim of seeing success in achieving offers at above the 2007-8 baseline of 15% still applies. As these schools and colleges reflect some of the most educationally disadvantaged centres in the UK, the attainment of this target will have a direct impact on achieving Target 1 in this access Agreement, and will support the attainment of Targets 2 and 3. The number of attendees at the teacher conferences is increasing each year, so the numbers of students applying to Oxford from schools and colleges with limited applications or success is likely to increase proportionately.

117. Given the use of **contextual information** in the admissions process (as detailed in paragraph 81), Oxford has, from the 2008-9 admissions cycle onwards, monitored and reported the success of applicants who are flagged and then shortlisted for interview. As a milestone for the access Agreement, Oxford will report the offer success rate of flagged candidates. It is anticipated that flagged candidates shortlisted for interview will achieve at least the same success rate for gaining offers as all applicants to Oxford from the same school or college sector (maintained comprehensive, grammar, FE college, sixth form college, or independent). In 2009-10 there were 478 flagged candidates identified as applicants; the changes to the flagging criteria have resulted in 598 applicants being flagged in 2010-11, and 928 in 2011-12.
118. As the students who are flagged in the admissions process are so identified on the basis of educational and socio-economic disadvantage (and from 2011-12 onwards low participation neighbourhood) this milestone has a direct bearing on Targets 1, 2 and 3.

### *Other areas of monitoring and analysis*

119. There is considerable media and political attention on the composition of Oxford's undergraduate student body by reference to prior **school type**. The HEFCE adjusted benchmark for Oxford published in 2010-11 indicated a benchmark ratio of state (maintained) to independent schools of 67:33.
120. In 2011-12, percentages of applications to Oxford from UK students in UK schools were 63.1 state and 36.9 independent sector respectively. This compared with 60.5 state, and 39.5 independent sector in 2007-8. In 2010-11, percentages of offers by Oxford were 57.9 state and 42.1 independent, compared with 54.8 and 45.2 in 2007-8. The University believes that the increase in applications from, and offers to, applicants from the maintained sector has been due to the significant increase in its access and outreach activities, particularly the focus on involving teachers and developing programmes to support applicants from state schools with limited experience of Oxford.
121. However, evidence shows that this measure is often misleading as an indicator of social diversity. There are students from relatively wealthy backgrounds at state schools, and students from relatively disadvantaged ones at independent schools. One third of the current holders of the full Oxford Opportunity Bursary (students with a household income of less than £25,000) were educated in the independent sector.

122. Our goal is to increase access for under-represented groups. We are not convinced that using school type is the best means to that end. We believe the targets we have identified will be more useful in tackling the challenges of access from under-represented groups.
123. The University will continue to report in its annual statistical release the state and independent mix of UK students attending UK schools who apply and who are made offers. But in current circumstances, we do not believe this would be either a helpful or meaningful target or benchmark in addressing the very complex factors related to under-representation in selective universities.
124. The University will be monitoring the level of students from **households with incomes of less than £16,000**. It is considered that these are the most financially disadvantaged in society, and it is below this threshold that some qualify for receipt of free schools meals, and consideration for the proposed pupil premium. The University does not consider that identifying simply those students who have actually been in receipt of free school meals provides a suitably robust indicator of disadvantage as they are not available in every school or college with post-16 provision, nor does every eligible student choose to receive them.
125. There are no national statistics currently available on the number of students whose household income level is below £16,000 and who attain the required academic threshold to make a competitive application to Oxford. In 2010-11, around one in ten of the University's UK undergraduate intake was admitted from households with this level of declared income. It is likely that this group is especially debt averse, and discussions with our student union have indicated that this group of applicants has limited access to accurate advice and guidance. It will be a significant challenge to maintain this level of participation with the new funding arrangements, and we will monitor this carefully.
126. We anticipate that achieving our targets for increasing participation at Oxford of students from neighbourhoods with low participation in HE and from disadvantaged backgrounds will contribute to an increase in the proportion of students we admit from **black and minority ethnic groups** (paragraph 129), and we will continue to monitor this.

127. We will provide significant financial assistance to applicants from households with incomes below £16,000 who secure places. We will ensure that any potential University applicant who comes into contact with Oxford will have access to all the information required to consider applying to Oxford, or any other University. Activities which will support this work are:

- Tuition charge waivers;
- Bursary provision;
- Targeted financial information. The University's dedicated webpage [www.ox.ac.uk/fundingupdate](http://www.ox.ac.uk/fundingupdate) aims to give potential applicants continued access to clear and transparent information on funding arrangements for 2013 entry and provides a comprehensive overview of both government and university support as the information becomes available.
- Guidance for those applicants who are made an offer, to ensure that they are fully aware of all of the available financial assistance that they can apply for and receive.

## 5. Equality and diversity

128. The University of Oxford and its colleges seek to admit students of high academic ability and potential. All colleges select students for admission without regard to gender, marital or civil partnership status, disability, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age or social background. Decisions on admission are based solely on the individual merits of each candidate and the application of selection criteria appropriate to the course of study.
129. Whilst there are no HESA or HEFCE performance indicators showing the expected ethnic composition of the undergraduate student body, it is clear that some groups of **black and minority ethnic** (BME) students do not progress to the most academically selective universities and courses at a rate that would be anticipated based upon their percentage in the UK population overall. There are many reasons for this, but course choices and a propensity for some ethnic groups to focus heavily on the most oversubscribed subjects are factors which particularly affect applications to Oxford. However, attainment levels at GCSE and A-level (e.g. in the most recent data available from UCAS, there were only 65 students achieving AAA (excluding general studies) or better, who defined their ethnicity as Black-Caribbean), prior experience of higher education and school and college guidance also have an effect on successful applications from these groups to Oxford as well as other universities.
130. Oxford will continue to offer support to all those candidates who display the level of academic attainment and potential required to make a competitive application. The University will continue to look for particular interventions which may assist and encourage applicants from BME backgrounds, working with partner organisations such as those mentioned in paragraph 63. As part of the annual admissions statistical release, the University will also continue to publish detailed information on the ethnicity of applicants and their relative success rates in securing offers and places at Oxford.
131. The University encourages applications from **students with disabilities** and is proactive in encouraging disclosure. Upon acceptance at Oxford, all students who have not disclosed a disability in their UCAS application are given the opportunity to amend their record so that the appropriate support can be provided prior to commencement of their study. Colleges, departments and faculties, assisted by the Disability Advisory Service, have extensive experience in supporting students with disabilities. The Service engages and involves students with disabilities throughout their time at Oxford.

132. The University will seek to encourage and diversify applications and participation by **mature students**, particular in areas which encourage and support social mobility. We will also be working closely with local FE and HE providers who provide routes by which mature entrants can access higher education. Oxford does not, though, view this as a simple issue, particularly when a high proportion of the mature students who are admitted to undergraduate courses (e.g. those which open up the professions such as Graduate Entry Medicine) already have a number of prior qualifications, frequently at postgraduate level. The proportions of mature students on undergraduate courses will be reported in the annual undergraduate admissions statistical release.
133. Oxford will continue to monitor the applications, admissions, satisfaction levels and attainment of students according to gender, age, ethnicity, and disability. The University currently lacks data on students' other protected characteristics, including religion and belief, sexual orientation, marital status and pregnancy, but is considering systems by which to collect some of this information on a voluntary basis. It would not be appropriate to set specific targets for participation until reliable baseline figures and comparative data for the UK higher education sector become available.

## 6. Monitoring and evaluation

134. The University will monitor progress against each of these targets and milestones on an annual basis and publish the results in its Undergraduate Admissions Statistical Release. Individual access programmes will be evaluated to test their effectiveness in meeting these targets. The University would be interested in working with other selective universities with tuition charge waivers and bursaries to measure the impact of its own schemes. In particular, the University would like to investigate further the impact of initiatives to increase participation from the most financially disadvantaged in society.
135. As described above, the University's record on student retention is excellent. Oxford's highly personalised education and student support ensure that student progress is closely monitored and any issues are picked up and dealt with promptly. We will monitor students in our target groups to ensure that this is done.
136. The Education Committee of Council, chaired by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education), is the senior body responsible for the delivery of this agreement. Education Committee includes representatives of the academic divisions and of the colleges. Two elected sabbatical officers of the Student Union represent students on the Committee.

## 7. Provision of information to prospective students

137. The University will ensure that all applicants have access to the relevant information to make an application which reflects their abilities through the following mechanisms:

- The undergraduate **prospectus** is designed to explain clearly each stage in the application process, and is accompanied by further publications focussed on student funding, interviews, and information for parents and carers. The undergraduate **admissions website** ([www.admissions.ox.ac.uk](http://www.admissions.ox.ac.uk)) provides applicants with up-to-date information, as well as contact details.
- College websites and prospectuses provide further information about their provision, including details of degree courses offered, living costs, and daily life in their academic communities.
- Subject-specific prospectuses, websites and handbooks give detail on the curriculum and facilities offered.
- The University's **Admissions information centre** is located in central Oxford and aims to encourage all potential applicants to choose Oxford through the provision of accurate information and sound advice on all aspects of the admissions process. Enquiries are managed in variety of ways, including face-to-face at the information centre and via telephone and email.
- The University also runs a series of large **open days** and on-campus **talks and tours** to provide prospective applicants with a chance to experience the University, talk to current students and obtain specific information on courses, colleges and student life.
- The availability of admissions- and access-related videos on our iTunes U and YouTube channel, as well as lectures which provide an insight into studying at the University, means this material reaches an even wider audience, and on platforms that young people regularly use. Admissions- and Access-related information is also promoted via our Facebook page, which has 180,000 followers.

### *Provision of financial information*

138. The University recognises that the provision of information on finances whilst at University is of particular importance both to prospective students and their sponsors. We are using the following mechanisms to address this:

- A dedicated **funding website for prospective students and their sponsors** [www.ox.ac.uk/fundingupdate](http://www.ox.ac.uk/fundingupdate) complements the undergraduate admissions

website. The site contains up to date information on the financial support available to students from the UK government, devolved administrations, and the University; the costs of studying; and full details of how to access support, including deadline reminders.

- The **fees and funding website** [www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding](http://www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding) is continually updated with tailored information relating to on-course financial support, including additional funding opportunities and hardship funding for current students.
- The University's **Fees, Funding and Scholarships Search tool** [www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding/search](http://www.ox.ac.uk/feesandfunding/search) enables undergraduate students to identify the fee, tuition charge waiver, bursary and government support that they may be eligible for according to their household income and the UK region/EU country where they are resident, and provides an approximation of the living costs they can expect when studying at Oxford.
- Students who hold an offer are sent a '**Funding Booklet**' in January, outlining the financial support package for which they may be eligible and providing the opportunity to sign up for targeted funding alerts. Subscribers receive emails from January to April reminding them to apply for student support and advertising applicable University scholarships.
- A **dedicated email address** [student.funding@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.funding@admin.ox.ac.uk) exists to answer queries from current and prospective students.
- Finance presentations are available at every **open day** and advisors are available to answer individual questions on a dedicated student funding stand.
- The central funding team provide briefings and updates for both college staff and other sections of the University, who have day-to-day contact with prospective and on-course students to enable them to communicate the Oxford and government support packages.

139. The student funding website and Fees, Funding and Scholarships Search tool described above were re-developed in 2011 using usability groups of students. Although students from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are outside the scope of this agreement, the University provides the same level of information and assistance to prospective students from these devolved administrations, as well as England. Measures taken by the University and its colleges are intended to complement the advice which is available to students from the regional funding agencies.

## Appendices

<b>Annexe A</b>	<b>No longer required by OFFA</b>
<b>Annexe B</b>	<b>Details of fees, income, expenditure, and milestones/targets: provided to OFFA in the separate template</b>
<b>Annexe C</b>	<b>Checklist: provided to OFFA in the separate template</b>
<b>Annexe D</b>	<b>Baseline data for targets and milestones</b>

## Annexe D: Baseline data for targets and milestones

### Background

The University will utilise a range of measures which focus on factors that provide some of the most significant barriers to participation in higher education generally and to admission to Oxford specifically. The research that underpins targets 1-3 in this Agreement has indicated that there may be some overlap between some of the criteria used. The schools and colleges with the lowest success in gaining admission to Oxford may be in catchment areas with low participation neighbourhoods and they may include numbers of students who face socio-economic disadvantage. But there are many divergences from this; in particular, where there are significant geographical catchment areas for schools or colleges in major urban conurbations or very rural areas or where admission to the school or college is highly influenced by academic selection criteria. Baseline data for target 4 is in the main body of the Agreement.

### Target One: Increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from schools and colleges which historically have had limited progression to Oxford

Year of Entry	Total number of UK applicants (Total accepted UK applicants)	Total number of UK applicants from target schools and colleges	Target students not shortlisted for interview	Target students rejected after interview	Target students made offer but declined place	Target students failing to meet offer conditions	Target students accepted having met offer	Target students withdrawing from UCAS process	Percentage of Target students as percentage of overall UK accepted students
2008	10,051 (2,738)	2,895	882	1,281	11	64	572	85	20.9%
2009	10,839 (2,717)	3,180	1,124	1,331	12	42	572	99	21.1%
2010	12,284 (2,662)	3,651	1,524	1,374	15	44	572	122	21.5%
2011	12,068 (2,665)	3,546	1,468	1,367	11	58	592	56	22.2%

**Note:** The baseline data for this target has been constructed from UCAS A-level school and college performance data for the period 2006-9, and Oxford application and admission statistics. The value for accepted students of 572 that occurs in each year up to 2010 has been checked and is a statistical coincidence.

## Target Two: Increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds

Year of Entry	Total Number of UK applicants matched with ACORN postcode (Total accepted UK applicants)	Total number of UK applicants from ACORN postcodes 4 and 5 (i.e. target group)	Target students not shortlisted for interview	Target students rejected after interview	Target students made offer but declined place	Target students failing to meet offer conditions	Target students accepted having met offer conditions	Target students withdrawing from UCAS process	Percentage of Target students as percentage of overall accepted UK accepted students (ACORN postcodes)
<b>2008</b>	<b>9,765 (2,675)</b>	876	293	370	4	24	<b>150</b>	35	<b>5.6%</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>10,725 (2,688)</b>	1,014	381	397	4	17	<b>178</b>	37	<b>6.6%</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>12,152 (2,645)</b>	1,105	483	398	1	15	<b>162</b>	46	<b>6.1%</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>11,949 (2,639)</b>	1,246	517	483	2	26	<b>200</b>	20	<b>7.6%</b>

**Note:** The use of ACORN postcode data, which categorises the socio-economic circumstances of an applicant's household, has been used by the University as part of the contextual flagging of candidates since the 2009 entry admissions cycle. The postcode data set is highly detailed, allowing definition down to groups of twelve households, and is updated on an annual basis. It is used as part of the contextual flagging process by a number of other highly selective universities.

**Target Three: Increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from neighbourhoods with low participation in higher education**

Year of Entry	Total number of UK applicants matched with POLAR 2 postcode participation data (Total accepted UK applicants)	Total number of UK applicants from POLAR 2 quintile one and two postcodes	Target students not shortlisted for interview	Target students rejected after interview	Target students made offer but declined place	Target students failing to meet offer conditions	Target students accepted having met offer conditions	Target students withdrawing from UCAS process	Percentage of Target students as percentage of overall accepted UK accepted students (POLAR 2 postcodes)
<b>2008</b>	<b>9,869 (2,697)</b>	1,236	351	532	8	23	<b>271</b>	49	<b>10.1%</b>
<b>2009</b>	<b>10,765 (2,705)</b>	1,421	493	568	4	25	<b>284</b>	47	<b>10.5%</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>12,175 (2,644)</b>	1,490	615	555	5	21	<b>249</b>	45	<b>9.4%</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>11,950 (2,640)</b>	1,524	643	572	4	25	<b>269</b>	16	<b>10.2%</b>

**Note:** POLAR 2 data sets are used by HEFCE to assess participation in higher education by neighbourhood. Whilst it is possible to assign postcodes, the breakdown is at the level of council voting wards, so it is not as finely grained as ACORN postcode data. The POLAR 2 dataset was last updated in 2007, and it has not been used as part of the admissions flagging at Oxford. From the 2011-12 admission cycle it will be used and tutors will be aware of those candidates who live in a postcode where the participation in higher education is in the lowest 40% of school and college leavers.





