



UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

AGREEMENT WITH THE OFFICE FOR  
FAIR ACCESS 2015-16

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This access Agreement between the University of Oxford and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) covers full-time Home/EU undergraduate and PGCE students admitted in the academic year 2015-16. It builds on the extensive experience and evidence gained by the University and its colleges in recent years. Autonomy and diversity characterise the collegiate University, and our access activities and arrangements embody these 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 and in their progression to graduate study or employment. 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;

**Informing** potential applicants and current students about the University, the selection process, the cost of studying for a degree, and the support available;

**Admitting** those with the greatest academic ability and potential in their chosen subject, on merit alone, using fair and consistent procedures;

**Educating** students in a world-class teaching environment marked out by the tutorial system as well as by other benefits of the collegiate environment;

**Supporting** them at Oxford – financially, academically, pastorally, and with careers advice (noting Oxford's current excellent retention rate of 98%).

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, retain and help them to progress into employment or postgraduate study whilst on course; and (iv) how these measures will be monitored against our targets.

### (i) Access and outreach (paragraphs 18-77)

In 2015-16, we will devote over £5.5m to access and outreach work, aimed at attracting applicants from backgrounds which have been under-represented at Oxford, and equipping them to make competitive applications. We will also ensure that information about our educational provision and financial support is clear and easily accessible.

### (ii) Admissions (paragraphs 78-85)

This Agreement reflects Oxford's approach of seeking to attract applications for undergraduate study from all those within the UK who can demonstrate the ability and potential to benefit from the intensive and highly academic courses of study that 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 (over 17,200) 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 86-116)**

We will continue to devote substantial resources to providing a package of generous maintenance bursaries, costing up to an estimated **£7.2m** in 2015-16, and to maintaining tuition fee reductions worth **£3.6m** for three cohorts of continuing students, and for a subset of 2015-16 entrants from the lowest-income households starting in 2015, as part of the Moritz-Heyman Scholarship Programme (paragraph 89).

**(iv) Targets and outcomes (paragraphs 117-134)**

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

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

The measures outlined above will cost up to **£14.2m** in 2015-16, broken down as follows:

ACTIVITY	OFFA countable	Not OFFA countable	Total
<i>Outreach</i>			
Baseline expenditure in 2010-11	£1.91m	£2.10m	£4.01m
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14	£1.33m	£0.33m	£1.66m
Expenditure in 2015-16	£3.24m	£2.43m	£5.67m
<i>Retention, support, and employability (including monitoring and evaluation)</i>			
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-15	£0.39m	£0.32m	£0.71m
<i>Financial Support</i>			
Bursaries (three bursary schemes in operation across the cohorts) and hardship provision	£6.97m	£0.29m	£7.26m
Tuition fee reductions (three tuition fee reduction schemes in operation across the post-2012 entry cohorts)	£3.63m	£0m	£3.63m
<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENDITURE IN 2015-16:</b>	<b>£14.2m</b>	<b>£3.04m</b>	<b>£17.3m</b>

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The seven over-arching objectives in the University of Oxford's current strategic plan (2013-18) include the following: 'To fulfil the aims that no potential student should be deterred from applying to Oxford by financial or other barriers and that no student's success should be hampered by financial difficulties'; 'To ensure, through a commitment to the personal education of each student, a quality of education and experience which enables students to apply the values, skills, and intellectual discipline they have acquired in their future lives and careers, and which generates a lifelong sense of connection with Oxford'; and 'To contribute effectively to the cultural, social, and economic life of the city of Oxford and the Oxfordshire region'.
2. As applied to undergraduates these objectives involve **informing** and **attracting** applications from candidates 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 tutorial-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 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 in targeted local 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 is higher than at almost all other UK higher education institutions. This is largely because of its resource-intensive tutorial provision, but also because of the very high quality and range of support facilities and infrastructure available at both college and University levels. 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 degree courses are a rigorous preparation for challenging and rewarding careers.

**7. Supporting** students: Oxford proposes to maintain its very generous bursary provision in order to continue to address the challenge of attracting students from lower income households. This upfront support for living costs will enable students to prioritise their academic studies and to make the most of the range of supplementary extra-curricular opportunities available. The **Moritz-Heyman Scholarship Programme**, launched in 2012-13, is testament to Oxford's commitment to ensuring that all students with the talent to succeed at Oxford can thrive here (paragraph 89).

**8.** As well as financial support, students also benefit from the support available through their college. 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, from trained student peer support groups to designated welfare advisers. This is complemented by the services provided by the University.

**9.** The University of Oxford shares the HE sector's widespread concern about the potential impact of the continued reductions in the HEFCE grant on the stability of the sector, and about the rapidity with which these significant changes have been introduced. Nonetheless, the University will seek 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 that we offer.

**10.** The impact of all of the activities that the University and its colleges undertake to widen access will be evaluated against progress made towards meeting our targets. The findings will inform the direction of future Agreements. Where our findings have a broader application to the higher education sector we will ensure that they are appropriately disseminated.

**11.** The University works closely with the **Oxford University Student Union (OUSU)**, who are represented on each of the committees that develop the Oxford financial support package and outreach programmes, approve the access Agreement, and monitor progress against our targets and outcomes. The University also collaborates with OUSU on a number of joint outreach initiatives.

**12.** 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.

**13.** The University of Oxford and its colleges are educational charities, which have devoted substantial resources to Oxford's resource-intensive education since their foundation. The average cost of an undergraduate education at Oxford is significantly higher than the income received per Home/EU student per year. With a headline fee of £9,000 per annum for full-time Home/EU students who entered in or after 2012, along with HEFCE funding for teaching, the University

received approximately £9,000 per new-regime Home/EU student in 2013-14 after tuition fee reductions were applied, with the shortfall being met through other University and college sources including endowment income and donations.

## 1. UNDERGRADUATE AND PGCE TUITION FEES IN 2015-16

- 14.** The University will continue to set a standard tuition fee for full-time Home/EU undergraduate and PGCE students of £9,000 per year for 2015 entry.
- 15.** The standard year abroad fee for full-time Home/EU undergraduates commencing their course in 2015 and undertaking a compulsory year abroad in 2016-17 onwards will be set at £1,350 (15% of the full tuition fee).
- 16.** The University will be offering full-time undergraduate certificate and diploma courses in Theological Studies for 2015 entry, with a standard fee of £9,000 for first degree Home/EU students. These are the only full-time certificate and diploma level courses offered by the University.
- 17.** The University will seek to amend its fees on an annual basis in line with government legislation for the 2015-16 cohort.

## 2. ACCESS AND STUDENT SUPPORT MEASURES

### 2A. OXFORD'S ACCESS RECORD

- 18.** The University of Oxford and its colleges undertake a wide range of outreach activity to support the aim of attracting the most able candidates regardless of their background. Our outreach activity is delivered by a central team, along with staff in colleges, faculties, departments, Oxford's world-class museums, and student organisations. This activity has become increasingly coordinated and targeted to relevant groups. We know that our main challenges lie in encouraging students from disadvantaged groups to apply to Oxford and helping them to make successful applications, and we will continue to work towards our challenging targets to address this.
- 19.** Admission to Oxford is based on academic achievement and potential. A student must be predicted to attain AAA at A-level or equivalent to make a competitive application; the requirements are higher in mathematics, science, and medical courses. We receive over 17,200 applications each year, and use a range of other measures to select the 3,200 students who will be made offers. Oxford's potential applicant pool is therefore not the total number of school-leavers, nor the total number of A-level students. Rather, it is the number of students who will achieve AAA or above at A-level (or equivalent qualifications), who wish to study a course offered by the University, and who are studying the correct combination of subjects for that course.
- 20.** HESA performance indicators assess institutional performance against a range of measures. These include students from state schools, low participation neighbourhoods, and students with disabilities. In line with previous OFFA guidance, the University has examined these measures, but has decided that in most cases they do not adequately address issues of attainment, regional disparity, and subject preference. We have preferred instead to establish targets that are Oxford-

specific and challenge us to focus on social, educational, and economic under-representation and disadvantage in the applicant pool.

**21.** The University has set a range of challenging targets (with annual milestones) that indicate our progress in admitting students from socially, economically, and educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. These targets are central to our outreach activities and cover the period from 2012 to 2016 entry. The 2011, 2012 and 2013 entry cycles proved atypical, given the extensive changes to student funding, and this was reflected in the limited success against the targets. The one exception was our success in admitting students with identified disabilities, where we have met or exceeded our benchmark level. The provisional figures for 2014 entry, however, indicate that we have made headway across the board, particularly in regard to candidates who are from postcodes with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage using the Acorn (A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods) postcode classification. Ambitions to diversify the pool of schools providing UK applicants, and increase the numbers of students from postcodes with limited participation in higher education have also shown advances from previous admissions cycles, due in part to the greater coordination of the admissions and outreach activity across the collegiate University. Sustained long term outreach activity takes time to show in the admissions process, and the need to allow a five year period to assess progress has been reiterated by Oxford on a regular basis.

**22.** Oxford will continue to focus its outreach efforts and resources on recruiting and encouraging a wider range of students to apply successfully to the University. Across the sector, work is done by universities in raising educational attainment within schools, which could be expected to impact on the diversity of Oxford's potential applicant pool. Oxford collaborates with schools, local authorities, and third parties to form networks that can work together to raise the attainment of students from the most deprived backgrounds (e.g. the **Deanery**, paragraph 57), and many of our outreach programmes incorporate attainment-raising elements.

## 2B. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO OUTREACH, ACCESS, AND STUDENT SUPPORT

**23.** During the academic year 2012-13, a Common Framework for Access was introduced to sit alongside the existing Common Framework for Undergraduate Admissions. This framework provides a strategic direction for all outreach activity that is carried out by the collegiate University. It aims to encourage greater awareness of outreach activity across the colleges, departments, Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, OUSU, and museums and collections. It will stimulate research in the field, encourage good practice, and provide evidence on the range and effectiveness of access activity taking place across Oxford, starting with a pilot reporting exercise in 2013-14.

**24.** Oxford's strategic approach to outreach work has been developed with reference to internal knowledge and experience gained through our access work to date, and to external research and evidence of successful programmes run by universities, schools and charities. Proceeding from this evidence base, the collegiate University has invested in long-term, large-scale initiatives. The **UNIQ summer schools**, and **Teachers' Programmes** have each been funded for an initial five-year period, (2010-14) and are sufficiently large to ensure that rigorous evaluation is meaningful and cost effective. After the conclusion of the current donor funding, the University has committed to continuing and funding UNIQ.

**25.** Research into access activities has identified that, provided they have a sufficient depth of content<sup>1</sup>, summer schools are a particularly valuable experience for students who have higher academic achievements and aspirations than others in their peer group. Oxford has run summer schools for disadvantaged students since the first Sutton Trust summer school in 1997. Based on evidence gained from this experience, the UNIQ summer school programme was established in 2010. In designing a bespoke summer school programme, Oxford committed to improving the targeting of participants, and to increasing significantly the number of participating students.

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<sup>1</sup> Hoare, T. and Mann, R. (2011), *The Impact of the Sutton Trust's Summer Schools on Subsequent Higher Education Participation: A Report to the Sutton Trust*. The Sutton Trust.

## 2C. EXPENDITURE ON CURRENT AND ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	OFFA countable	Not OFFA countable	Total
<i>Outreach</i>			
Baseline expenditure in 2010-11	£1.91m	£2.10m	£4.01m
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14	£1.33m	£0.33m	£1.66m
Expenditure in 2015-16	£3.24m	£2.43m	£5.67m
<i>Retention, support, and employability (including monitoring and evaluation)</i>			
Increase in recurrent expenditure in 2011-15	£0.39m	£0.32m	£0.71m
<i>Financial Support</i>			
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<b>ESTIMATED TOTAL EXPENDITURE IN 2015-16:</b>	<b>£14.2m</b>	<b>£3.04m</b>	<b>£17.3m</b>

26. Expenditure on access and student success in 2015-16 is estimated to be up to **£14.2m**. Expenditure as a proportion of the University's tuition fee revenue (£28.8m), taking account of the 'higher' fee appropriate to each cohort, will be around 49% (as against the expectation in the guidance of 35%). The present Agreement covers students admitted in the academic year 2015-16. For subsequent cohorts, we will continue to review total spend and the balance of spending between bursaries, outreach, access, and student support, in the light of evidence of their respective impacts and effectiveness.

27. The figures above include support for undergraduate and PGCE students ordinarily resident in the UK and the rest of the EU.

## 2D. ACCESS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITY

### (I) WIDENING ACCESS TO OXFORD

#### UNIQ SUMMER SCHOOLS

**28.** Oxford developed the **UNIQ summer schools** for UK state-educated students with support from the Helsington Foundation. This is an Oxford-wide activity, bringing together the expertise of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach, the colleges, departments and faculties, libraries, and museums and collections. Participants are selected using verifiable contextual information. This includes the student's GCSE A\* performance compared with their school average attainment, their Acorn and POLAR2 (Participation Of Local Areas) post code categories, their school's history of sending students to Oxford, and whether or not they have been in care. A personal statement is also an integral part of the application and provides a valuable preparatory activity for UCAS applications. In 2013 94% of UNIQ participants came from one or more target groups for outreach work, as identified nationally across the sector, or by Oxford in our access strategy.<sup>2</sup>

**29.** The 2014 UNIQ summer schools will have 1,000 participants on 35 subject strands, double the original cohort, and will have all subject areas available at Oxford represented on the programme. The University also supports candidates who are not successful in obtaining a place on the UNIQ summer school by providing alternative opportunities such as academic workshops and taster days in conjunction with departments and colleges. In 2013, a one day conference for 200 students was held in Oxford.

**30.** In 2013, we received 4,427 applications for 843 summer school places across 30 academic subject strands. 544 UNIQ participants later applied to Oxford and 237 have been made conditional offers, a success rate of 43.6% in comparison with an overall success rate of 20.1% for all applicants to the University.

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<sup>2</sup> These categories are: Acorn group 4 and 5; POLAR2 groups 1 and 2; schools with low progression to Oxford; schools with below average GCSE attainment; looked after children; household income of less than £35,000 indicating likelihood of eligibility for an Oxford bursary; self defining as black or other ethnic minority; no parental experience of higher education, or parental experience of higher education as adult learner.

**31.** The programme is highly targeted and students who participate enjoy high levels of success regardless of background. This is illustrated in the table below, which shows success rates for 2013 UNIQ participants who subsequently applied to Oxford, by contextual data target group. NB: an individual participant may fall into more than one category. For comparison, the average success rate of a student who applies to Oxford is 20.1%.

UNIQ 2013 PARTICIPANTS WHO APPLIED TO OXFORD (BY TARGET GROUP)	OXFORD SUCCESS RATE	PROPORTION OF TOTAL SUCCESSFUL UNIQ APPLICANTS
2013 UNIQ participants	43.6%	100%
2013 UNIQ participants from Acorn 4&5	41.1%	16.5%
2013 UNIQ participants from POLAR2 quintiles 1&2	40.3%	20.3%
2013 UNIQ participants from schools with low numbers of AAA students	39.4%	28.3%
2013 UNIQ participants from schools with little history of successfully applying to Oxford	43.8%	87.8%

**32.** The University intends further to assess the impact of the UNIQ summer schools by tracking participant progression to Oxford against control groups. This research is in the early stage of planning, but will follow on from previous studies from the University of Bristol on the impact of summer schools. It is expected that the first stage will be completed in summer 2014. Oxford is also investigating the potential for tracking UNIQ participant progress to other universities through the Higher Education Access Tracker service (**HEAT**) (paragraphs 60-61).

## ENGAGEMENT WITH TEACHERS

**33.** Oxford recognises that teachers have a key influence on students. Engaging with and supporting new and experienced teachers through a range of activities to promote access and disseminate information is therefore a vital part of our access strategy.

**34.** In 2008-09, Oxford piloted a series of **Regional Teachers' 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 national locations. These teacher conferences attract over 300 teachers and guidance advisers each year 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. The University will fund these conferences from 2014.

**35.** The University has seen measurable results from the Regional Teachers' Conferences and has an agreed target with OFFA relating to the conferences' outcomes (see paragraph 127). This target will continue to be applied in 2015-16 and subsequent Agreements.

**36.** In 2011 we extended the Regional Teachers' Conference programme with a **Mathematics and Science Teachers' Conference** and this is now part of our established programme of events for teachers. The programme continues to be developed collaboratively with the Mathematical, Physical, and Life Sciences (MPLS) Division at Oxford in order to encourage science teachers to engage with Oxford. These teachers are best placed to identify and support high achieving students. The conference provides admissions information as well as a programme of engaging Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) workshops which could form the basis of classroom lesson plans after the event. Every year the programme is over-subscribed and we will continue to monitor its impact.

**37.** The University also recognises the importance of supporting those entering the teaching profession, and provides briefing sessions for its **Teach First**<sup>3</sup> and **PGCE students**. Participants receive a briefing from Oxford staff on current issues in higher education 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 (IAG) to students who are considering applying to competitive universities and courses, and to enable teachers to support students through the admissions process. These annual events typically attract 150 students. The University has embedded this programme into PGCE training at Oxford to ensure that new teachers are made aware of the current admissions issues in higher education generally, and specifically at Oxford. This is a cost-effective model which could be incorporated into PGCE courses across the UK.

**38.** In 2010 we expanded our programme of work with teachers to include the annual **Oxford University Inspirational Teachers' Award**. The scheme targets first year students who attended UK schools and colleges with very little record of sending students to Oxford University, and asks them to nominate a teacher or adviser who fostered their passion for their subject or inspired them

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<sup>3</sup> Oxford is the largest provider of Teach First recruits (approximately 10% of the national recruits are Oxford graduates).

to apply to Oxford. To date, 80 teachers have been nominated to receive the award and 37 teachers have been honoured with an Inspirational Teachers' Award.

- 39.** In 2011, we developed the **Teachers' e-guide**, recognising that it can be difficult for teachers to take time away from school for training sessions. This provides up to date and transparent IAG to teachers and careers advisers supporting Oxford applicants.
- 40.** 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 over 2,500 teachers six times per year.
- 41.** We have restructured the information we present online, in response to feedback from teachers and other users of our website. We have introduced a new section in our 'How to Apply' pages, designed specifically for those who are supporting a student through the application process. This draws together all our online resources for teachers and parents, making this information easier to navigate. These pages will be relaunched with the University's new website, currently planned to go live in early summer 2014.
- 42.** The University and its colleges conduct an extensive range of school and college visits each year and maintain a database to record and evaluate all of this activity. In 2012-13 Oxford conducted over 2,900 activities, involving over 3,300 schools and colleges in the UK. This is a 35% increase in the number of events delivered and a 2% increase in the number of schools engaged from 2011-12. These increases are built on a 14% increase from 2010-11, indicating the success of Oxford's regional link programme. This engagement will continue to develop, and as we gather evidence of the most effective methods of supporting students and teachers, the work will be adapted so that it provides the best possible support.

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## WORKING WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

- 43.** The vast majority (85%) of our outreach with 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 Student conferences and UCAS HE fairs, provide information to all UK students considering an application to Oxford.
- 44.** It is important for Oxford University to target our resources effectively and to ensure that our activities have appropriate outcomes for the schools involved. We have developed a system that allows us to target the most appropriate activity for the specific needs of the particular school and the student body:
- A large proportion of schools produce a small number of students with the academic attainment to apply to Oxford on a regular basis. Highly tailored individual activities such as the OUSU student shadowing scheme, UNIQ summer schools, and school-cluster visits are targeted towards the individual students in these schools and colleges who achieve the required qualifications.
  - There is a group of schools that either has little history of sending applicants to Oxford or whose students have been relatively unsuccessful in their applications. We

target application and interview preparation workshops and awareness raising events at these schools and students.

- c. There are schools that have a large number of students with the required academic ability, but with little history of sending applicants to the University. For these we aim to break down myths about applying to Oxford, and increase knowledge and confidence about the application process amongst students.
- d. Finally, there is a group of schools from whom Oxford receives a significant number of successful applicants. We aim to retain our working relationship with these schools, as they support a range of students, including some who come from socio-economically deprived backgrounds or from groups who are not fully represented within our student body.

**45.** Attending **UCAS Higher Education Fairs** is an important part of our outreach strategy. In a recent UCAS survey 54% of teachers identified the fair as ‘the main form of contact with higher education advisers’ for many of their students. There are about 1,500 schools with whom Oxford’s only contact is through the local UCAS fair. Oxford college representatives meet with teachers at these events, and try to further develop relationships under our regional links scheme.

**46.** A group of colleges has 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 2012-13, the Pathways Programme ran 28 events, working with approximately 3,300 students and 500 teachers from 450 schools. Almost all colleges at Oxford 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 years 12 and 13 elements of the Pathways programme in 2013-14 and beyond.

**47.** An **OUSU shadowing scheme** brings year 12 students to the University for a day, during which they are partnered with an undergraduate student with whom they attend lectures, classes, lab sessions or tutorials, depending on the subject. This is a valuable opportunity for students from targeted schools and colleges to experience a highly personalised introduction to student life at Oxford.

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## (II) WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**48.** Within our local region, Oxford concentrates on supporting pre-16 year olds and their families. In 2012-13 the University had 132 separate local school contacts (different programmes at the same schools), with 3,243 participants, amounting to 595 contact hours. Our focus reflects the geographical boundary of the former Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire Aimhigher Partnership, in which Oxford was an active participant.

**49.** The **Oxford Young Ambassadors** scheme, which aims to increase attainment among local students at the higher end of the ability spectrum by raising their GCSE outcomes from B to A grades, saw its first cohort complete the programme in summer 2013. An independent data analyst is currently reviewing the cohort’s collated GCSE results, and initial findings are expected in Spring 2014. A report on the first cohort’s eventual destination data aged 18 is expected in 2017.

**50.** The University has also developed an extensive programme of activity for students in upper primary school (years 5 and 6) to prepare them for the transition to secondary school. In the academic year 2012-13, **Dave Smith** and the **Great University Mystery** conducted over forty visits to primary schools in Oxfordshire. The aim of the activity is to introduce the concept of higher education to primary school students and is embedded in the Key Stage 2 curriculum.

**51. COMPASS: Young Carers** is a sustained contact programme aimed at raising the aspirations and increasing the educational engagement of local years 10 and 11 students who have caring responsibilities. Young carers often have high levels of absenteeism and tend to under-perform at GCSE, compared to their peers. As part of the programme evaluation, the University, in collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council, is comparing the GCSE attainment of COMPASS participants against non-cohort Oxfordshire young carers, with promising initial results: in 2013, 56% and 37% respectively achieved 5 A\*-C grades.

**52.** COMPASS has also been cited as evidence of best practice in the NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, England and Wales) January 2013 policy paper on 'Access and Inclusion: Young Adult Carers and Education and Training'. More locally, Oxfordshire County Council has introduced a schools standard to recognise those schools that support young carers. One of the criteria for the bronze award is to nominate (or at least make efforts to nominate) their pupils for the COMPASS programme.

**53.** As a University with global reach and reputation, Oxford places a high value on diversity. The University works intensively with partner organisations in the UK to promote the value 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. Working jointly with Cambridge, the University has supported the pilot year of the **Target Oxbridge** scheme which supports BME applicants. All three of the initial participants applying to Oxford have secured places. The University has contributed to the annual **Future Leaders** publication '100 of the UK's Most Outstanding New Black Graduates' and was delighted that the top spot in 2013-14 went to an Oxford graduate.

**54.** 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. For this reason, we continue to flag students who are or have been in care, both when selecting participants for outreach programmes, and as one component of the contextual data package used when shortlisting for interview. Care leavers with a household income of £16,000 or less are also given first priority in the allocation of Moritz-Heyman Scholarships.

**55.** The University seeks to encourage applications from **mature students**, who can choose to apply to any college admitting undergraduates or to Harris Manchester College, which only admits students who are aged 21 or over at the time of enrolment. However, Oxford does not view mature student participation 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.

**56.** Oxford recognises the importance of promoting STEM subjects to young people from an early age, to ensure that students are supported in choosing the right combination of subjects to 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. Research students and academic staff also participate in a range of science outreach events, such as **Marcus du Sautoy's Marvellous Mathemagicians**, a series of student-run workshops designed to introduce school pupils to new and interesting applications of mathematics; **Accelerate!**, a live science show which introduces children from year 7 upwards to particle physics and accelerator physics; **Oxford Robot Games** and a Computer Science activity day for year 10 students. STEM students are also prioritised in the selection process for Moritz-Heyman Scholarships, in recognition of the importance of STEM subjects to the UK economy, and the need to increase representation in these degree courses.

**57.** The University's Department of Education (OUDE) has long-established partnerships with Oxfordshire state secondary schools, and a small number of others in close proximity but in other local authority areas. These partnerships form the basis for Oxford's highly rated PGCE course, which in the most recent OFSTED inspection was awarded the highest grades in all categories. This partnership structure ensures enhanced links with schools, to support the continuing professional development of teachers and to engage teachers in research aimed at school development. The **Oxford Education Deanery** was launched by the Vice-Chancellor in November 2013 as a multi-layered system in which the expertise of OUDE and teachers in Oxford schools can be brought together to enhance student learning. This is being developed in the first instance in collaboration with **Oxford City Learning**, a network of state-funded educational providers, which aims to improve the life chances of students in Oxford's schools. By connecting the University with all Oxford schools through the Deanery, the benefits of the partnership will reach a larger number of teachers and students than would be the case with a University sponsored Academy or University Training College.

**58.** The origins of the Deanery lie in the exceptionally strong, 25-year partnership between OUDE and local secondary schools for the training of teachers, in a recognition that stronger connections between schools and the University will benefit both, and in the significant range of outreach work that the collegiate University carries out across local schools and colleges, and the links that have developed as a result. The development is being informed by an OUDE research project entitled 'Raising and sustaining aspiration in city secondary schools', which investigated perceptions of the relationships between schools and universities held by school students (focusing on year 9), senior school staff and a range of University of Oxford staff.

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### (III) COLLABORATION WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES AND ORGANISATIONS

**59.** The University of Oxford recognises that many selective universities share similar aims for widening access, and that there is significant benefit to students and teachers if these institutions work together in communicating key information. Oxford works closely with the Russell Group member institutions, through active participation in the **Russell Group Widening Participation**

**Association and the Admissions Practitioners Group.** Oxford hosted the highly successful Russell Group Teachers' Conference in 2012, and will continue to support this event when it is run on a biennial basis.

**60.** Oxford also collaborates with 21 other HEIs by subscribing to the **HEAT** service, a continuation of collaboration by the South East Aimhigher partnerships. This collaborative research and evaluation enables us to share costs and expertise and contributes to our evidence-based evaluation framework. Underpinning the HEAT service is a bespoke database in which all collaborators record and analyse information about WP students and their activities. The database has also been uploaded with historical data for outreach delivered through Aimhigher from 2004-05.

**61.** HEAT provides the University with tools and reports to support the full widening participation cycle, from targeting and planning through to monitoring and evaluation. A series of educational and socio-economic datasets are available for targeting activity, and we now have a rich longitudinal dataset of outreach participants that we can track through other datasets such as UCAS and HESA to assess the relationship between outreach participation and higher education progression.

**62.** Oxford collaborates with the **University of Cambridge** to run a series of eight annual one and two-day **Oxford and Cambridge Student Conferences** across the UK. These events typically attract around 10,000 potential applicants (from year 12 and equivalent) and their teachers or guidance advisers, and aim to give an insight into the courses available at both universities. The two universities provide training to ensure that all staff and students present at these events are able to explain the similarities and differences between the two institutions, including admissions processes and course structures, to enable students to make an informed choice. Oxford also works closely with Cambridge on a range of other outreach policies and activities. These include ensuring national coverage and relevant talks are delivered at the UCAS Higher Education Fairs.

**63.** Oxford will continue its strong record of supporting conferences organised by other UK universities, which aim to inform teachers and guidance advisers on admissions and access issues. In the past year Oxford staff have delivered sessions at events organised by: **the University of East Anglia; Edgehill University; the University of Essex; the University of South Wales; and the University of Surrey.** In addition, Oxford has supported the reviews of the Outreach and Recruitment activity at **University Campus Suffolk** in April 2013, and of **Bristol University's** Student Recruitment, Access and Admissions team in December 2013.

**64.** Oxford also assists a number of bodies involved in advising students and teachers about higher education. During 2012-13 Oxford staff delivered training sessions at events arranged by UCAS, Cambridge Occupational Analysts and the Regional Training Agency. These events raised awareness about the admissions process, particularly areas such as interviews and admissions tests which are generally not required by most other universities.

**65.** In 2011, the University, **Oxford Brookes University** and **Buckinghamshire New University** launched the collaborative group **Study Higher**, with the aim of continuing the established work of the former Aimhigher Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire partnership. In June 2013, Study Higher ran its second Teachers' and Advisers' Conference, hosted by Buckinghamshire New University, which attracted 56 delegates from regional schools, FE colleges and careers services. The **Lloyds Scholars Programme** (run by the Lloyds banking

group) committed to support the conference in 2013 and 2014 and bring an employability perspective to the event.

**66.** In May 2014 the last of the **Study Higher** pilot conferences will take place at Oxford Brookes University, and the three-year model will be reviewed. The partnership is keen to cement its relationship and in 2014 a systematic review will be held, ensuring that collaborative activity remains appropriately targeted and cost effective.

**67.** In 2013 Oxford launched a new partnership with the universities of Bath, Reading, Southampton, Cardiff, and Surrey. Under the title of **UNet**, this partnership aims to encourage students to consider higher education courses at selective universities within the region, and to promote good practice among partners. A UNet 'choices' conference for year 12 students from across the region will be held in July 2014 at the University of Bath, with sessions contributed by all partner HEIs. From 2014-15, the partnership intends to develop activity focusing on engagement with local teachers.

**68.** Oxford collaborates with the **University of Bath** and the **University of Liverpool** on a programme of mutual exchanges for our pre-16 widening participation participants, allowing them to gain experience of a variety of HEIs. We also work in partnership with the **University of Winchester** on joint activity for participants on the COMPASS: Young Carers programme.

**69.** In 2013-14 the University, in partnership with Christ Church college, will launch a new collaboration with the educational charity **IntoUniversity**. A local learning centre will be established in Blackbird Leys, an area of Oxford which suffers from significant socio-economic deprivation. IntoUniversity East Oxford will offer a programme of academic support, pastoral care, practical support and mentoring to pupils from target primary and secondary schools.

**70.** 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. In recent years, 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, and we are delighted that the Director of Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach has taken up post as National Chair in 2014. We are keen to continue supporting HELOA, particularly as an engine for developing UK-wide initiatives on providing information and guidance to prospective applicants, their parents and guidance advisers.

**71.** The University of Oxford is an Outreach Associate of **South East Physics network (SEPnet)**, which is a consortium of universities in the South East of England and beyond (University of Kent, University of Portsmouth, Queen Mary, University of London, Royal Holloway, University of London, University of Southampton, University of Surrey and University of Sussex). The consortium works together to advance and sustain Physics as an important subject for the UK economy. SEPnet is supported by HEFCE and Oxford is a delivery partner in the schools outreach programme. This programme has a vision to bring the excitement, innovation and knowledge of physics to students, teachers and the public. The consortium offers the opportunity to share good practice, resources and a coordinated approach to Physics outreach in the region.

**72.** Oxford continues to be a very strong and active supporter of **Teach First**. In addition to the CPD provision for Teach First teachers, Oxford contributes to **HEAPS** (Higher Education Access Programme for Schools), providing activities in Oxford for over 200 year 12 students and participating in events for Year 12 HEAPS students and their parents. Oxford's colleges also give significant support to graduates participating in Teach First by providing bursaries during the summer training programme.

**73.** The University also supports the work of the **Social Mobility Foundation** (SMF), collaborating with the University of Cambridge to run an admissions briefing and interview session for SMF students before their interviews at either Oxford or Cambridge.

**74.** In 2013 OUSU and the Widening Participation team collaborated to promote 'Back to School Week' to students and staff, with over 100 Oxford volunteers taking part. 'Back to School' is an initiative run by the social enterprise charity **Future First**, encouraging people to return to the state schools they attended and give careers advice to current pupils.

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#### (IV) WIDENING PARTICIPATION IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

**75.** 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.

**76.** The proportion of BME students in the PGCE cohort increased substantially in the past ten years (from 5% to 12%). The sudden reduction in 2012-13, reported in the previous Agreement, was reversed for the 2013-14 intake (for which the figure is 11%, back to previous levels). Having looked at a range of factors and having talked to colleagues from other higher education providers there appears to be no clear reason for the uncharacteristically low figure for 2012-13. It should, however, be noted that this was the first year of increased fees and this may have had some impact.

**77.** PGCE 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.

## 2E. CONTEXTUAL DATA AND ADMISSIONS

**78.** Oxford's resource-intensive admissions process is focused 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, admissions tests, written work, and (if they are shortlisted) at least two and up to four interviews.

**79.** 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 pre-determined 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.

**80.** 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 17,200, of whom about 11,550 are UK nationals. Almost all of these applicants will be predicted to achieve 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 Advanced Highers or alternative qualifications. It is thus inevitable that, each year, Oxford turns 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 gain at least one or more A\* grades. In 2013 for example, there were 4,941 applicants who did not receive an offer, but who went on to get at least A\*AA. Of those who were accepted to Oxford for 2013 entry, 83.3% achieved at least A\*AA, and 34.9% achieved A\*A\*A\* or better.

**81.** 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 selection criteria for the course. The tests are one part of the process used to shortlist candidates for interview. They are particularly useful in an access context as they are designed to test each applicant's individual abilities rather than their level of educational support.

**82.** We are mindful that tests are one way in which the Oxford admissions process differs from that at many other universities. To make the arrangements as simple as possible, we have worked closely with the Admissions Testing Service (formerly Cambridge Assessment) to streamline the process of registration. Feedback from applicants, schools and colleges suggests that this has been very welcome.

**83.** The University has used evidence-based contextual information in the admissions process since the 2008-09 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, who are disabled or who have been in care. Pre-application and pre-interview contact is available with the **Disability Advisory Service (DAS)** for relevant candidates and the DAS advises on reasonable adjustments to the admissions process. This ensures that applications from these groups are given especially careful consideration at the short-listing stage.

**84.** Following a review of contextual information in 2009-10, Oxford adopted a new approach in conjunction with the University of Manchester. This approach is based on a candidate's residential postcode, as well as school or college performance at both GCSE and post-16. This places additional emphasis on students who come from backgrounds that indicate both educational and socio-economic disadvantage. Candidates who apply from care backgrounds receive particular attention, and are highlighted specifically in the application process for additional consideration by tutors. In 2011-12 a flag for applicants from neighbourhoods with low participation in HE was also introduced. A further flag was introduced for 2012 entry for applicants from schools and colleges that historically have had limited progression to Oxford.

**85.** Interviews with 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 their subject, and they enable tutors to gauge aptitude and potential. Interviewers make allowances for the different kinds of teaching and preparation that students will have had. 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.

## 2F. STUDENT RETENTION, SUCCESS, AND EMPLOYABILITY

**86.** Oxford 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 and chaplains.

**87.** This provision is supported by coordinated University services, where these can best be delivered university-wide, e.g. in the areas of careers, disability, counselling and financial guidance, and by OUSU. Oxford will continue to invest in the student experience and in those services that support it.

**88.** In 2013-14, the University is in the process of agreeing a **Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students** to sit alongside the existing common frameworks for admissions and access, taking into account both the growth in demand for, and resource dedicated to, provision of disability support services at Oxford, and the increase in monitoring and reporting obligations. The Framework's guiding principles are:

- a. That the collegiate University will, in order to reflect its stated aim to 'lead the world in research and education', seek to demonstrate exemplary inclusive practice in relation to disabled students.
- b. That the collegiate University will comply with all applicable legislation, and follow the guidance outlined in University policies and relevant external publications, noting the requirement to make reasonable adjustments insofar as they do not compromise the integrity of academic competence standards.

**89.** Little research into the impact of debt aversion on progression to higher education has been produced to date. There is some evidence that students from the lowest income families may be deterred from applying to university due to the perceived upfront financial cost. With this in mind, the **Moritz-Heyman Scholarships** were introduced in 2012 following a generous donation of £75m from Sir Michael Moritz and Ms Harriet Heyman. The gift is constituted as a three-part challenge fund, which will eventually raise a £300m endowment through further fundraising by the collegiate University. This scheme will provide means-tested financial support to undergraduate students in

perpetuity. In 2013-14 the Moritz-Heyman Scholarship Programme provides £11,000 of financial support per year in the form of tuition fee reductions and bursaries to two cohorts of 100 students from families with a household income of £16,000 or less, and who were flagged on a number of contextual data disadvantage indicators (paragraphs 83-84). In addition, Moritz-Heyman Scholarship holders are encouraged to take part in voluntary work, which further develops their transferable skills, and to participate in outreach with the aim of inspiring those from similar backgrounds to aspire to higher education. Scholars are also supported in finding and taking up internship opportunities, as we recognise the value of such experience for employability and career progression.

**90.** In September 2013, the second cohort of incoming MPLS students took part in the cross-departmental **physical sciences bridging programme**, with accommodation and catering provided by Pembroke and Hertford Colleges. The residential component of this programme takes place before the first term of the academic year starts. The inaugural programme (September 2012) supported 40 students starting their undergraduate course in Chemistry, Physics or Earth Sciences in making the transition to higher education. The programme offers a mixture of core mathematical skills, subject specific material and transferrable skills such as time management. Priority is given to those applying who fit our criteria for widening access to higher education.

**91.** The bridging programme is evaluated through three student questionnaires: at the end of the programme, one term into their studies, and after sitting first year examinations. A comparison of first year examinations results of participants and non-participants is also undertaken. The evaluation data so far confirms the effectiveness of the residential programme, and the Division will confirm plans to continue and adapt the programme.

**92.** For students not attending the residential programme, online resources were developed and launched in August 2013 to support the mathematical skills of all students in the physical sciences. In addition, the MPLS Division is developing online resources, with support from central services, for all undergraduate students (in all subjects) to build generic skills such as time management and critical thinking.

**93.** The **Student Counselling Service** ensures that all students have equal access to specialised psychological therapy should they have difficulties 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, the service 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, those with debilitating examination anxiety, or those who have experienced depression. The service offers activities and workshops in colleges, sessions on the pilot bridging project outlined above and collaborative work with colleges to provide a formal **Peer Support Programme**. This programme, funded by colleges, sees about 250 students a year receive 30 hours' training plus fortnightly supervision from a dedicated Counselling Service team. Peer supporters come from diverse backgrounds and are trained to be a welcoming first port of call for all students and to model an inclusive attitude to those who require support within their college. The transferable skills gained through the programme also mean that trainees have been useful in

access and widening participation programmes, and in welcoming candidates who come to Oxford for interview.

**94.** The University works closely with the Student Union to develop mechanisms that 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. In 2012-13, the Student Advice Service helped 438 students. Through its six elected sabbatical officers, the Student Union represents students on all issues to the University and campaigns on issues affecting students. The six elected sabbatical officers work towards achieving OUSU's vision of students as active partners in shaping their Oxford experience. The University regards constructive engagement with the Student Union as a fundamental priority in developing its student retention, academic representation and support work.

**95.** All 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 on five of the eight employability measures defined by the CBI. Oxford's graduates are highly successful in most fields of human endeavour and across the globe. Key to this success are the experience, transferable skills and attributes developed through their courses and in the many other opportunities available to all students in student clubs, societies, sport, or student representation.

**96.** 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 thousands of internships and part-time or full-time, permanent vacancies. Approximately 66% of first year and 85% of finalist undergraduates engage with activities organised by the Careers Service. The Careers Service runs an annual survey of student users to quantify their usage of the service, interest in particular fields and take up of the activities arranged; these data are used to adjust the service to match demand.

**97.** The Careers Service facilitates an increasing number of learning and development opportunities including the Internship Programme, the Student Consultancy, Insight into Teaching, Springboard, and The Shed (a student entrepreneurship and innovation training programme). In 2014 the **Oxford University Internship Office** will arrange approximately 500 opportunities for students to work on structured and funded projects across the globe from the USA to China, from Malawi to Denmark; many of these are supported by university alumni. Approximately 40% are in the UK. In 2014 and 2015, the Internship Programme will include funded research internships, supported by HEFCE, for our undergraduates. These will help de-mystify postgraduate research and enable a wider range of students to make informed choices about further study.

**98.** The Student Consultancy facilitates opportunities for over 110 students each term to work in teams of four with local organisations to identify solutions for real business issues. Clients include local third sector groups, community action groups, local government, SMEs and large corporates. Insight into Teaching enables at least 70 students, twice a year, to work in schools state and independent, local and across England, primary and secondary – to gain valuable experience over

three days. In addition to the well-established Springboard programme for the professional development of female staff and postgraduates, a bespoke version for women undergraduates has been developed and launched in Oxford in partnership with the Springboard Consultancy, and this is now being taken up by universities across the UK. 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.

**99.** The Careers Service has Careers 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.

**100.** As well as monitoring overall first destinations in the DLHE survey, we analyse the first destinations of undergraduates who had a POLAR2 or Acorn contextual flag to see if there are differences in salary, employment sector or level, and unemployment rate. We also assess whether POLAR2 or Acorn flagged undergraduates make more or less use of the Careers Service, particularly the learning and development programmes, so that we can adjust the offering as necessary.

**101.** The provision of postgraduate funding opportunities is central to our support for progression to **postgraduate study**: in 2014 over 1,000 fully-funded scholarships, covering the full academic range of Oxford's graduate courses, are available for new master's and doctoral students from the University, our colleges and supporters. The **Clarendon Scholarships**, funded by Oxford University Press and Oxford's colleges, have supported over 1,300 graduates at Oxford since their launch in 2001. The **Oxford Graduate Scholarship Matched Fund**, an innovative global matched fundraising scheme, has raised over £75m in endowment funding for postgraduate scholarships in the past 18 months.

**102.** The University's commitment to supporting progression to postgraduate study is further evidenced by its successful bid to HEFCE's 2014-15 **Postgraduate Support Scheme**, to fund a portfolio of projects with a budget of £3.75m.

**103.** Oxford also runs subject-specific events across the University that increase access to information about postgraduate study, for both our own students and wider audiences. Recent examples include the Doctoral Training Centre Open Day for current students in the Medical Sciences Division, and the Humanities Graduate Open Day.

**104.** The University has created a new, three-year (2014-16) post of **Graduate Access Manager**, to research, develop and advise on postgraduate access policy. Jointly (55%) funded by HEFCE, the post-holder will also contribute to collaborative research into possible barriers to postgraduate study being undertaken nationally through HEFCE's Postgraduate Support Scheme.

## 2G. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN 2015-16

**105.** 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, and in recent years tuition fee reductions, colleges have always supported students with additional assistance, such as, hardship grants. A considerable benefit of the collegiate system is that welfare provision can be targeted in this individualised manner.

**106.** In the summer term of the academic year 2012-13, Oxford carried out two surveys of its first year undergraduates: an internal survey for all students, and an external survey on behalf of HEFCE of Home/EU students from households with incomes of £16,000 or less, who were in receipt of National Scholarship Programme (NSP) funding. The survey results were used to assist us in assessing the effectiveness of bursaries when considered against tuition fee reductions. Feedback from both surveys highlighted a clear preference for bursaries over tuition fee reductions. Furthermore, 63% of NSP survey respondents indicated that they would prefer to receive a cash amount of £3,000 rather than a tuition fee reduction of £5,000. The discontinuation of the NSP, originally intended to support institutions in offering tuition fee reductions, has further influenced Oxford's decision to concentrate its financial support on generous maintenance bursaries from 2015-16.

**107.** 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. Through Oxford's provision of bursaries to supplement government loans and grants, it is intended that students from the lowest income households will be able to cover their living costs at university in full and take part in a range of academic and extra-curricular opportunities, without having to take paid employment during term time. We estimate that students from households with incomes of £25,000 or less will be able to reduce the amount of government maintenance loan they take out by at least £2,000, based on the current lower range estimate of Oxford living costs over nine months; this should also help to maintain Oxford's very high retention rates (see paragraph 86).

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### (I) BURSARY SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS IN 2015-16

**108.** The University and colleges jointly fund Oxford's bursary provision, largely from philanthropic sources and from endowment income. In 2015-16, we will provide the following bursaries to students<sup>4</sup>:

- a. A bursary of £4,500 to students from household incomes of £16,000 or less in each year of their course, which includes students on the Moritz-Heyman Scholarship Programme.
- b. A tapered bursary from £3,500 to £500 for students from household incomes of £16,001 to c. £42,620 in each year of their course.

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<sup>4</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.

BURSARY PROVISION IN 2015-16	
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	BURSARY LEVEL P.A.
£0 - £16,000	£4,500
£16,001 - £20,000	£3,500
£20,001 - £25,000	£3,000
£25,001 - £30,000	£2,000
£30,001 - £35,000	£1,500
£35,001 - £40,000	£1,000
£40,001 – c. £42,620	£500

**109.** Currently around one in ten Home/EU full-time undergraduate students at Oxford is from a household with a declared income of £16,000 or less and would benefit from the highest level of bursary.

**110.** Students following the six-year Medicine course and the four-year accelerated Medicine course for graduates who start their course in 2015-16 will be eligible for a bursary in all years of their course, depending on their household income. These proposed arrangements assume that the 2014 entry NHS funding arrangements will continue for 2015 entry Medicine students.

**111.** The University will take into account all forms of government support that PGCE students are eligible for, including the National College for Teaching and Leadership's Training Bursaries. If a PGCE student has a household income of c. £42,620 or less and is eligible for government support (including maintenance grants, loans, and training bursaries) of less than £9,000, it is expected that Oxford will provide a bursary according to the rates for undergraduate students. However, the University will need fully to consider its response to the funding of PGCE students once the National College for Teaching and Leadership's funding arrangements for 2015-16 have been confirmed.

**112.** Full-time students following the certificate and diploma courses in Theological Studies starting their course in 2015-16 will be eligible for an Oxford Bursary.

**113.** The University will continue to provide an Oxford Bursary to students who commenced their studies in 2014 or before at the rates published on our website and in previous access Agreements. The University will maintain bursary support at current levels for these cohorts in 2015-16.

**114.** 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.

## (II) TUITION FEE REDUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS IN 2015-16

**115.** Research<sup>5</sup> suggests that debt aversion is most prominent amongst potential applicants from the lowest income households. These students may therefore be 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. To address this, Moritz-Heyman Scholars will also receive an annual tuition fee reduction of £3,000, to enable them to reduce the size of the tuition fee loan required from the government.

**116.** The University will continue to provide a tuition fee reduction to students who commenced their studies between 2012 and 2014 at the rates published on our website and in previous access Agreements.

## 3. TARGETS AND OUTCOMES

### OUR PRINCIPLES AND OUR APPROACH

**117.** We have set 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 that may impact on the outcomes of our activity. Where appropriate we have included milestones to allow us to monitor our progress.

**118.** Our package of financial support to undergraduate students 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 still unclear. We will continue to review our position on the basis of further evidence and analysis.

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<sup>5</sup>Pennell, H. and West, A. (2005), 'The impact of increased fees on participation in higher education in England', *Higher Education Quarterly*, 59, pp 127-37; Davies, P., Slack, K., Hughes, A., Mangan, J. and Vigurs, K. (2008), 'Knowing Where to Study? Fees, Bursaries and Fair Access'. Institute for Higher Educational Policy Research and Institute for Access Studies, Staffordshire University.

**119.** Against this background, the targets and associated outcomes that we are proposing are designed to ensure:

- a. That all prospective applicants 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, its courses, and the financial support available. This involves working with schools and colleges that may have little track record of putting forward successful applications to Oxford, and ensuring that able students from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds are encouraged to apply.
- b. That our admissions processes are tailored to identify potential as well as prior attainment among such applicants, once they have applied. 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 families are not unfairly advantaged. The use of aptitude tests and a series of personal interviews with tutors contribute towards this outcome.

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## (I) ACTIVITY TARGETS AND OUTCOMES

**120.** Oxford's 2012-13 access Agreement set out four highly challenging targets that would form the basis of our outreach and access work through to 2016-17:

1. to increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from schools and colleges that historically have had limited progression to Oxford;
2. to increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds;
3. to increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from neighbourhoods with low participation in higher education;
4. to meet the HEFCE benchmark on UK undergraduate students at Oxford with declared disabilities or specific learning differences.

**121.** For the 2012 and 2013 entry years, progress against the first three of these targets was not in line with our aspirations, but provisional figures for 2014 entry suggest that there have been some significant advances, particularly with regard to offers made to candidates from the most socio-economically disadvantaged postcodes, as the table below demonstrates. The following table summarises the percentage of target students accepted for the year of entry from 2009 to 2014 for targets 1-3. The figures for 2014 are provisional and subject to change, since they are based on offers made rather than acceptances.

OFFA Target	Percentage of target students accepted for year of entry from 2009-14					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 <sup>6</sup>
1	19.0%	19.4%	21.1%	18.9%	19.6%	21.2%
2	6.5%	6.1%	7.6%	6.7%	6.8%	9.3%
3	10.4%	9.3%	10.0%	10.6%	9.8%	10.5%

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

122. Following a period of uncertainty in the national higher education sector, which saw a spike in the atypical 2011-12 entry year followed by a fall against the baseline in 2012-13 and a light rise in 2013-14, progress is again being made towards this target. We hope to see further growth over the remaining course of the target (25% by 2016-17), and to facilitate this we will continue to work with our outreach officers and tutors, who are made aware that an applicant is applying from a target 1 school in the admissions process.

**Targets 2 and 3: to increase the percentage from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (Acorn postcodes 4 and 5) and to increase the percentage from neighbourhoods with low participation in higher education (POLAR2 postcodes 1 and 2).**

123. Progress has been made against the targets relating to the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from postcodes which demonstrate significant socio-economic disadvantage, as measured by Acorn postcode datasets, and from postcodes which demonstrate low participation in higher education as measured by POLAR2 postcode datasets. The aim is that by 2016-17 we will reach or exceed 9% (target 2) and 13% (target 3). We welcome the progress made to date especially in the area of target 2, where the target has been exceeded, and we remain cautiously optimistic of continuing to make further progress, particularly as many of our outreach activities begin to establish regular and sustained engagement with schools and teachers. Applicants from Acorn and relevant POLAR2 postcodes are flagged within the admissions process to tutors, and the same flags are used as part of the selection criteria for participation in outreach and access activities.

**Target 4: to meet the HEFCE benchmark on UK undergraduate students at Oxford with declared disabilities or specific learning differences.**

124. The University recognises that it has much to offer to disabled students because the tutorial education system and collegiate environment provide a tailored and supportive university experience. Oxford continues to exceed the HEFCE location-adjusted benchmark on UK

<sup>6</sup> The 2014 figures are provisional and subject to change, since they are based on offers made, rather than acceptances.

undergraduate students with declared disabilities or specific learning differences. Oxford has a strong tradition of admitting and supporting students with disabilities, and accessibility is a core consideration of all our outreach activity.

Year	Total full-time first degree students	Number in receipt of DSA	PI for Oxford (%)	Benchmark (%)	Standard deviation (%)
2012-13	9,665	565	5.9	4.3	0.23
2011-12	9,685	455	4.7	3.7	0.22
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

## (II) ACTIVITY MILESTONES AND OUTCOMES

**125.** Oxford has continued to focus its widening access efforts on a number of large scale, flagship programmes. These are developed with reference to analysis of national attainment at individual school level and socio-economic data (Acorn and POLAR2), Oxford's applicant pool data and evaluation gathered from existing activities. The large scale nature of Oxford's flagship programmes renders them particularly useful for evaluation, which we will continue to use to inform future developments where appropriate.

**126.** Over the last four years the **UNIQ summer schools** have expanded significantly, while becoming ever more targeted to ensure the most deserving state school students benefit from the resource. As the number of beneficiaries of this programme has increased by 65.9% (see paragraphs 28-29), we are pleased that our application and admission rates for participants remain consistently high: at 43.6% their success rate is just over double that of the average Oxford candidate (1 in 5).

**127.** Oxford continues to prioritise its work with teachers, recognising that they are key influences in potential applicants' decision-making process. We are pleased to have exceeded our milestone regarding the success of students from schools with historically limited progression to Oxford, where teachers at those schools have attended a **Regional Teachers' Conference**. The fluctuation in annual success rates may be explained in part by the different geographical regions visited across this biannual programme: for example, Scotland and the North East of England traditionally send fewer students to Oxford. Therefore, in order to gain more meaningful conclusions, it is helpful to evaluate these results on a two year basis (i.e. 2008-10 was 20.5% and 2010-12 was 21.5%).

**128.** 'Flagged' candidates are shortlisted for interview, provided they are predicted to achieve the entry qualifications, and where they meet relevant attainment in any pre-interview tests. In order to be 'flagged', candidates must come from an area of socio-economic deprivation (using either the Acorn or POLAR2 data sets), and from a school with lower than national average attainment rates (at GCSE or A-level) or with historically limited progression to Oxford. We are pleased to report that the offer rate for 'flagged' applicants has increased by 2.8% from 19.1% in 2013 to 21.9% in 2014.

**129.** While it is not one of our official targets, Oxford is also encouraged to note that the number of undergraduate students from the poorest households (assessed by the Student Loans Company as having **an income of £16,000 or less**) has remained steady at approximately 1 in 10, despite the introduction of higher fees for 2012 entry and the enduring misconceptions about the cost of higher education which resulted. A household income of £16,000 is the cut-off point for free school meals; however not all of these students will actually have been in receipt of free school meals. We regard assessed household income as a more reliable indicator because of variation in provision across school sectors, and the decrease in uptake of free school meals as students get older. We are committed to continued monitoring of this cohort, and to transparency as one of the few institutions to routinely disclose the proportion of their student body from this income bracket.

**130.** There are no national statistics currently available on the number of students whose household income is £16,000 or less and who attain the required academic threshold to make a competitive application to Oxford. In 2013-14, around one in ten of the University's UK

undergraduate intake was admitted from a household 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. We will continue to monitor the level of participation within this group carefully.

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### (III) OTHER AREAS OF MONITORING AND ANALYSIS

**131.** There is considerable media and political attention on the composition of Oxford's undergraduate student body by reference to **prior school type**. In 2013-14, percentages of applications to Oxford from UK students in UK schools were 62.8% state and 37.2% independent sector respectively. This compared with 60.5% state, and 39.5% independent sector in 2007-8. In 2013-14, percentages of offers by Oxford were 57.4% state and 42.6% 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.

**132.** 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. 30% of 2012 entrants in receipt of the full Oxford Bursary (students with a household income of £16,000 or less) were educated in the independent sector.

**133.** 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. The University will continue to report in its annual statistical release the state and independent school 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.

**134.** We expect that achieving our targets for increasing participation at Oxford of students from neighbourhoods with low participation in higher education and from disadvantaged backgrounds may help us to also target **BME** groups and we will continue to monitor this. The Moritz-Heyman Scholarship Programme is specifically intended to target and support disadvantaged students, and initial analysis has identified that representation of BME students is around twice as high amongst Scholars in comparison with the undergraduate cohort as a whole, based on the first two years of the Programme.

## 4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

**135.** The University will monitor progress against each of our targets and milestones on an annual basis and will publish the results in its Undergraduate Admissions Statistical Release. Evaluation plans for outreach programmes (paragraphs 32, 49,50,61,125-127) will support the targets of the Agreement and also the objectives of Oxford's **Common Framework for Access**, which are to:

- a. Encourage and facilitate greater awareness of the activity across the collegiate University;
- b. Enable practitioners to share a common language when describing their work and its effectiveness;
- c. Stimulate discussion and research in the field, encouraging cooperation and good practice in the delivery of Widening Access activities;
- d. Ensure that there is a robust evaluation programme within the University building on existing good practice;
- e. Provide evidence for both internal and external bodies on the range and effectiveness of access activity carried out in Oxford. This will ensure that evidence is available not only at a project level but is also scalable within the University.

**136.** The Common Framework for Access also states that outreach activity should have evaluation built in from the design stage. This is to ensure that the activity's effectiveness is kept under review. Therefore as part of the planning process, outputs and benefits are identified, and the review proposed for assessing the returns against success criteria should be specified and monitored.

**137.** Monitoring and evaluation is therefore embedded in Oxford's access strategy. Our outreach database records all contacts with schools and colleges in the UK, and provides information on these institutions to better inform our targeting of activity and resource.

**138.** Data sets are produced or purchased annually to assist in our use of contextual data and targeting mechanisms. The Student Data Management and Analysis team routinely analyse admissions data to contribute to statistical releases and evaluation of activity, and the University is investing in a new Student Information System which will better enable us to track student progress and outcomes.

**139.** The University would be interested in working with other selective universities to measure the impact of student financial support schemes. In particular, the University would like to investigate further the impact of initiatives to increase participation from the most financially disadvantaged in society.

**140.** 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.

**141.** 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.

## 5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

**142.** In 2012, the University agreed a suite of equality objectives which embedded its access and outreach work within the institution's overall equality and diversity strategy. The student-related objective is to achieve the targets set out in the University's current Agreement with OFFA, and progress is reported in the annual Equality Report, available at [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/equalityreporting](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/equalityreporting). The University's **Equality Policy** contains a commitment to '[e]ncourage applications for study and employment from the widest pool of potential candidates, especially where representation is disproportionately low' and to take steps to meet the needs of individuals from protected groups where these are different from the needs of others ([www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/universityofoxfordequalitypolicy/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/universityofoxfordequalitypolicy/)).

**143.** In devising this Agreement, the University has addressed its responsibility under the General Equality Duty to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

**144.** Oxford takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that students with protected characteristics are sufficiently informed and supported throughout the recruitment and application processes. To this end, work is undertaken to attract all qualified candidates, including those with protected characteristics, and to scrutinise and evaluate the profile of those engaging with our outreach activities. We publish a very comprehensive set of annual admissions statistics on our [website](#). This annual report covers aspects of our admissions process relating to protected characteristics, and where there are apparent anomalies we undertake further investigation and research.

**145.** Contextual information is used to select and target participants for our outreach activities, and is also incorporated into our selection process to short-list applicants for interview, although this is limited because the UCAS process does not collect or provide information on all protected characteristics at point of application.

**146.** Oxford has not set specific targets in relation to ethnicity, but continues to develop targeted outreach for students from ethnic minority communities in line with our aim that all appropriately qualified candidates should consider applying to Oxford and should have access to relevant support and advice. The proportion of UK undergraduate BME students at Oxford is comparable with that at the Russell Group as a whole (excluding London). Furthermore, we are working with other third party organisations (**Target Oxbridge** and **Future Leaders**, paragraph 53) and drawing on their experiences and networks to ensure BME students are supported to make competitive applications to Oxford. We continue to support Target Oxbridge in their programme identifying year 11 pupils, who are supported through years 12 and 13 by a series of interventions, including mentoring.

**147.** Oxford recognises that female students remain under-represented in some subjects, and we are working to improve female application and retention rates within STEM degree courses as part of our work under the **Athena SWAN** programme. All departments in the sciences and medicine will have obtained or applied for an Athena SWAN award by April 2014, and an equivalent scheme will be rolled out to the Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions under the new sector-wide **Gender Charter Mark**. For many years, Oxford has delivered a range of outreach programmes, including residential events, introducing female school pupils to a range of STEM degree courses and connecting them to women working within these disciplines. A review of these programmes is currently underway, and recommended changes will be implemented in order to ensure that they continue to deliver maximum impact.

**148.** The University encourages applications from **students with disabilities** and is proactive in encouraging disclosure. Upon acceptance at Oxford, all offer-holders who have not disclosed a disability in their UCAS application are encouraged to do so and to make contact with the DAS to discuss their needs so that the appropriate support can be provided prior to their commencement of study. Oxford continues to exceed its HEFCE benchmark in relation to students with disabilities, with **5.9%** of full-time undergraduate students being in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) in 2012-13.

**149.** The University has increased its investment in the DAS to facilitate the creation of new roles, including a dedicated disability adviser for students with SpLD; in-house diagnostic and needs assessment; an enhanced mentoring service; and greater links with the University Counselling Service. This resulted in higher rates of disability disclosure during 2012-13, and increased opportunities to encourage students to obtain support from the DSA.

## 6. PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

**150.** 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.

**151.** The undergraduate **prospectus** is designed to explain clearly each stage in the application process, and is accompanied by further publications focused 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.

**152.** A new brochure providing information for **mature students** (<http://www.ox.ac.uk/mature>) on full- and part-time courses available at Oxford was developed in 2013.

**153.** 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.

**154.** Subject-specific prospectuses, websites, and handbooks give detail on the curriculum and facilities offered.

- 155.** The OUSU **Alternative Prospectus** and website provide a student perspective on admissions and life at Oxford.
- 156.** 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.
- 157.** The University also runs a series of large **open days** and **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.
- 158.** We provide a wealth of **video and audio materials** through our iTunes U site and our YouTube channel, including videos explaining and promoting each of our undergraduate degree courses, subject lectures, and admissions related information. Admissions and access-related information is also promoted on our Facebook page, which has over 1.3 million followers. Using social media tools in this way allows us to reach an even wider audience, including students who are using the internet with no particular intention of interacting with Oxford University.
- 159.** 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 address this in the following ways.
- 160.** A dedicated **funding website for prospective students and their sponsors** ([www.ox.ac.uk/funding](http://www.ox.ac.uk/funding)) 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.
- 161.** 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.
- 162.** 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 tuition fee, 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.
- 163.** Students who hold an offer are sent a **Funding Booklet** in January, outlining the financial support package for which they may be eligible and Oxford has a **dedicated email address** ([student.funding@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:student.funding@admin.ox.ac.uk)) to answer queries from current and prospective students.
- 164.** Finance presentations are available at every open day and advisers are available to answer individual questions on a dedicated student funding stand.
- 165.** 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. 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 to those from England. Measures taken by the University and its colleges are intended to complement the advice that is available to students from the regional funding agencies.

## 7. CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

**166.** Oxford values the opinion of its students, particularly on the issues covered in this Agreement, which so significantly impact on our current and future students. Student Union representatives sit on all major committees of the University dealing with access and admissions, and through this have had input into the drafting of this Agreement.

**167.** Students also contribute to University decision making through regular participation in the Student Advisory Group, which is a joint forum between the University and the Student Union to allow students to pilot and offer detailed feedback on specific areas of policy or operational development. For example, in the summer of 2013, students contributed to a new annual student expenditure review to determine local estimated living costs. Figures from this exercise complemented the results of two structured quantitative surveys on financial support, as mentioned in paragraph 106 above, which together fed into a number of University funding and financial support policy discussions, including the setting of bursary and scholarship funding provision for 2015-16.

## ANNEX A: BASELINE DATA FOR TARGETS

### 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 1: 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	10,094 (2,755)	2,647	815	1,227	8	54	516	27	18.7%
2009	10,894 (2,727)	2,891	1,036	1,243	12	51	518	31	19.0%

<b>2010</b>	<b>12,333 (2,670)</b>	3,345	1,439	1,327	14	38	<b>562</b>	18	<b>19.4%</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>12,107 (2,665)</b>	3,327	1,393	1,301	9	50	<b>562</b>	12	<b>21.1%</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>11,832 (2,695)</b>	3,147	1,359	1,196	10	54	<b>510</b>	18	<b>18.9%</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>11, 556 (2,643)</b>	3,033	1,307	1,122	11	47	<b>518</b>	28	<b>19.6%</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>11,418 (2,871)</b>	3,046	1,265	1,114	N/A	N/A	<b>(645)</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>21.2%</b>

**Figures in red are subject to change, since they are based on offers made, rather than acceptances.**

**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. Since setting the original target in 2010-11, better statistical analysis and evaluation of the UCAS school dataset has resulted in a more accurate identification of schools and colleges meeting the OFFA target one criteria. This has reduced the number of schools in the dataset overall, a process which has been added to through school merger and creation of academies which were not in the original dataset.

**Target 2: 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)
2008	9,765 (2,675)	876	293	370	4	24	150	35	5.6%
2009	10,725 (2,688)	1,014	381	397	4	17	178	37	6.6%
2010	12,152 (2,645)	1,105	483	398	1	15	162	46	6.1%
2011	11,949 (2,639)	1,246	517	483	2	26	200	20	7.6%
2012	11,656 (2,658)	1,079	468	393	2	24	179	13	6.7%
2013	11,412 (2,618)	1070	456	399	2	23	179	11	6.8%
2014	11,355 (2,863)	1430	589	507	N/A	N/A	(320)	(14)	9.3%

Figures in red are subject to change, since they are based on offers made, rather than acceptances.

**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 3: 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 POLAR2 postcode participation data (Total accepted UK applicants)	Total number of UK applicants from POLAR2 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 (POLAR2 postcodes)
2008	9,869 (2,697)	1,236	351	532	8	23	271	49	10.1%
2009	10,765 (2,705)	1,421	493	568	4	25	284	47	10.5%
2010	12,175 (2,644)	1,490	615	555	5	21	249	45	9.4%
2011	11,950 (2,640)	1,524	643	572	4	25	269	16	10.2%
2012	11,683 (2,670)	1,466	581	555	6	27	283	14	10.6%
2013	11,408 (2,624)	1,364	519	543	3	24	258	17	9.8%
2014	11,250 (2,840)	1,512	602	579	N/A	N/A	(318)	(13)	10.5%

Figures in red are subject to change, since they are based on offers made, rather than acceptances.



**Note:** POLAR2 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 POLAR2 dataset was last updated in 2007, and it has not been used as part of the admissions flagging at Oxford. Since the 2011-12 admission cycle, all tutors are 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.

**Access agreement 2015-16 resource plan (submission 1<sup>st</sup> May 2014)**  
**(Table 7) Targets and milestones**

Institution name: University of Oxford

Institution UKPRN: 10007774

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

Number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	Other statistic - Applications (please give details in the next column)	Increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from schools and colleges which historically have limited progression to Oxford.	No	2010 entry	21.5%	24%	24.5%	25%	25.5%	26%	The University will monitor progress on an annual basis and report this in the annual statistical release.
2	Other statistic - Socio-economic (please give details in the next column)	Increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from postcodes which demonstrate significant socio-economic disadvantage, as measured by ACORN postcode datasets	No	2010 entry	6.1%	8%	8.5%	9%	9.5%	10%	The University will monitor progress on an annual basis and report this in the annual statistical release.
3	HESA T1b - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR2) (Young, full-time, undergraduate entrants)	Increase the percentage of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from postcodes which demonstrate low participation in Higher Education as measured by POLAR2 (quintiles 1 and 2) postcode datasets	No	2010 entry	9.4%	12%	12.5%	13%	13.5%	14%	The University will monitor progress on an annual basis and report this in the annual statistical release.
4	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Meet the HEFCE location-adjusted benchmark on UK undergraduate students at Oxford with declared disabilities or specific learning differences	No	2010 entry	2.9%	As indicated by HEFCE	As indicated by HEFCE	As indicated by HEFCE	As indicated by HEFCE	As indicated by HEFCE	The University will monitor progress on an annual basis and report this in the annual statistical release.

**Notes**

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

**Table 7b** - Other milestones and targets.

Number	Please select target type from the drop-down menu	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this a collaborative target?	Baseline year	Baseline data	Yearly milestones (numeric where possible, however you may use text)					Commentary on your milestones/targets or textual description where numerical description is not appropriate (500 characters maximum)
						2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	
1	Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	60% of those participating in the UNIQ summer schools make an application to Oxford, and 30% of those applying to receive an offer of a place.	No	2010 entry	53% application rate and 26% offer rate						The number of participants on the UNIQ summer schools is scheduled to rise from 650 in 2010-11 to 1000 in 2013-14, which will impact on the 2014-15 admissions cycle. Currently funding for this project has been extended for another year until July 2014-15. Beyond 2014-15 additional funding is being investigated to continue this programme.
2	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Improve the participation, application, and success levels from schools and colleges who have had teachers attend the Regional Teacher Conferences, where these schools and college have either a limited numbers of qualified candidates or where there historically has been limited success in securing offers.	No	2008 entry	15% success rate						2008 entry is used as the baseline year because it precedes the first of the Regional Teachers Conference events. Currently funding for this project has been extended for another year until July 2014-15. Beyond 2014-15 additional funding is being investigated to continue this programme.

3	Contextual data	Using contextual information in the admissions process to identify candidates who may be suitable to be interviewed on the basis of either time in care, or socio-economic and educational disadvantage. The expectation is that identified candidates would then achieve the same success rate in receiving offers as all applicants to Oxford from equivalent school or college sectors.	No	2012 entry	19.9% success rate for flagged students compared with 24.5% for all UK domiciled applicants						Overall offer success rates vary from year to year, so outcomes will be reported in the annual statistical dataset
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**Optional commentary on milestones.**  
This box is character-limited to 1000 characters; however, we are happy for you to upload additional 'supporting information' as a separate Word/pdf document.