

## Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) 2016-17

### 1. Summary

1.1 This Agreement is submitted in accordance with the requirements placed on those higher education institutions that intend to charge above the basic rate<sup>1</sup> of tuition fee for Home/EU students commencing full-time undergraduate courses in 2016-17. This Agreement and those preceding it have been prepared in accordance with the guidance from OFFA<sup>2</sup> and after extensive consideration by relevant joint University and College Committees, which have all included student representation.<sup>3</sup>

1.2 The key features of the Agreement are:

- the higher rate<sup>4</sup> of tuition fee (according to the maximum rate announced by the Government annually) to be charged, irrespective of course followed, to full-time UK and EU undergraduates and Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) students admitted from October 2016 onwards;
- a needs-based financial support package that will provide support for maintenance for those undergraduates from lower income households;
- a minimum level of outreach activities appropriate to currently under-represented groups;
- challenging milestones, aimed at increasing the proportion of our UK undergraduate intake from particular groups without compromising the integrity of Cambridge's admissions procedures and entry standards.

### 2. The Context of Undergraduate Admission to Cambridge

2.1 This Agreement is concerned with the admission by the Colleges of UK students from UK schools and colleges. The collegiate University's policy is to admit UK students of the highest academic calibre and potential irrespective of financial or other non-academic considerations. In conducting our admission process the University and its Colleges adhere to the five principles set out in the independent review of Admissions to Higher Education led by Professor Schwartz in September 2004.<sup>5</sup> A fair admissions system should:

- be transparent;
- enable institutions to select students who are able to complete the course as judged by their achievements and their potential;
- strive to use assessment methods that are reliable and valid;
- seek to minimise barriers for applicants;
- be professional in every respect and be underpinned by appropriate institutional structures and processes.

2.2 The standard A-level offer for undergraduate entry to Cambridge is currently A\*AA for arts and humanities subjects and A\*A\*A for science subjects. There is a large pool of qualified applicants and competition is keen: in 2013-14, only 26.5% of c.9,624 applicants from UK schools and colleges could be accepted, and of those accepted around 83.8% exceeded the standard offer (the average number

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<sup>1</sup> It is expected that the "basic rate" for 2016-17 will be set at £6,000 for full-time courses, but we note that government policy could change following the General Election in May 2015

<sup>2</sup> "How To Produce An Access Agreements for 2016-17", Office For Fair Access, Feb 2015

<sup>3</sup> Most particularly the Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) and University Council. The membership of both bodies includes representatives of the Cambridge University Students Union, as did the group tasked with producing this document.

<sup>4</sup> It is expected that the "higher rate" for 2016-17 will be set at £9,000 for full-time courses

<sup>5</sup> [www.admissions-review.org.uk](http://www.admissions-review.org.uk)

of A\*s achieved by entrants was 2.79). The University does not operate subject quotas, although some courses are subject to external controls (for example, medicine) or capacity restrictions (for example, architecture and some laboratory-based courses) and competition is open across all subjects. Because of the full-time, residential nature of Cambridge's undergraduate courses, it is unlikely that the University's undergraduate intake will significantly increase over the next five years. A wider pool of qualified applicants would accordingly make admission to Cambridge all the more competitive.

- 2.3 We are also mindful of the implications of the difficulties being experienced by the state sector in student take-up and teaching provision in a number of subjects that are critical for entry into many of our courses, including modern languages, mathematics and physical science subjects. Additionally, and as noted by the Russell Group, a lower proportion of state-sector students overall achieve top grades compared with those in the independent sector, and state sector students are less likely to apply to selective universities.<sup>6</sup>
- 2.4 We have in place rigorous selection processes (which include interviewing over 80% of UK and EU applicants as well as aptitude tests for some particular courses). These are intended to identify, as precisely as possible, the highest achievers with the greatest potential from the pool of applicants who are capable of meeting our entry requirements and the demands of our intensive undergraduate programmes.
- 2.5 Whilst we shall continue to monitor examination performance of students from the various school backgrounds, research by the University<sup>7</sup> shows that performance in public examinations continues to be the best predictor of a student's likely performance once admitted to the University, and that there is no significant differential in terms of performance between students admitted by school sector.
- 2.6 We are concerned that current proposals for A-level reform would significantly reduce student choice and flexibility. Public examinations at the end of Year 12 provide students and their advisers with an objective and meaningful measure of how well the transition from GCSE to Sixth Form study has been made. These results indicate progress and enable students to make informed decisions about which subjects to focus on in Year 13 and beyond. The lack of formal end of Year 12 examinations would adversely affect student confidence in making these decisions as well as the quality of the advice they receive about higher education options, and also prevent institutions such as Cambridge from accurately assessing current academic performance and trajectory. We are also concerned that proposed funding arrangements would effectively restrict students in many state schools to three A-levels, meaning that the opportunity to study extremely valuable fourth subjects such as Further Mathematics would be lost.
- 2.7 If effected these proposed reforms could have a significant bearing on our ability to make progress on access measures<sup>8</sup> because our quantitative research shows that UMS scores provide the single best indicator of academic achievement and potential.<sup>9</sup> Independent research conducted by the University of Bristol supports this view.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Our Access Record

- 3.1 Our ability to identify students likely to succeed is demonstrated by the proportion (over 85%) gaining at least Upper Second Class Honours. We have one of the highest continuation rates of any UK higher education institution (currently 98.5% compared to 91.4% for the sector).<sup>11</sup> This is in part a product of

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<sup>6</sup> [www.russellgroup.ac.uk/russell-group-latest-news/137-2011/4808-hesa-performance-indicators--russell-group-comment/](http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/russell-group-latest-news/137-2011/4808-hesa-performance-indicators--russell-group-comment/)

<sup>7</sup> [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/research/](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/research/)

<sup>8</sup> See letter to the Right Honourable Michael Gove MP, [www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/responses/](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/responses/)

<sup>9</sup> [www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/predictor\\_of\\_performance.html](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/predictor_of_performance.html)

<sup>10</sup> "University Admissions and the Prediction of Degree Performance: an Analysis in the Light of Changes to the English Schools' Examination System", R.Johnston et al, Higher Education Quarterly, Jan 2015, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hequ.12067/pdf>

<sup>11</sup> HESA Performance Indicators 2011-12, Table 3a, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/pis/noncon>.

our collegiate system (see section 6.9), but is also assisted by the extensive financial support that we offer to our students. Our graduates are more likely to be in work or further study (or both) six months after graduation than is the case nationally, are more likely to be in graduate-level jobs (currently 92% compared to 70% for the sector), and have amongst the best starting salaries in the UK (currently £26,569 compared to £21,000 for first degree graduates nationwide)<sup>12</sup>. Our research shows that Cambridge graduates from low-income households are as successful in the employment market as their higher-income peers.<sup>13</sup>

- 3.2 The University has made significant progress against admissions measures. The proportion of young state sector students securing a place at the University of Cambridge has increased at the rate of approximately 0.5% per year over the last decade.<sup>14</sup> State sector admissions to Cambridge are now at their highest level in 30 years and our research shows that this currently reflects national patterns of attainment by school type.<sup>15</sup> The proportion of black, Asian and minority ethnicity students admitted overall reflects national demographics,<sup>16</sup> and analysis of age, gender and disability data shows that Cambridge admissions mirror the sector once attainment and subject mix are taken into account. We cannot make any assessment of our position in relation to other protected characteristics at the current time since no comparable national data are available (see Section 8.5).
- 3.3 The University aims to attract the best and brightest students in the UK, regardless of background. In support of this objective, Cambridge is currently engaged in an unprecedented level of additional outreach activity which reaches a diverse range of under-represented groups across the UK (see Section 6). Recent tracking of students attending established Cambridge University outreach events between 2011 and 2013 showed that at least three quarters applied to a Russell Group institution, whilst over one fifth applied to Cambridge itself.<sup>17</sup> Overall, at least 88% of such students secured a place at a university, and those that applied to Cambridge had a higher success rate than for all students applying to the University over the same period, despite coming from backgrounds matching widening participation criteria. This demonstrates not only that Cambridge outreach works for Cambridge, but also that it contributes to the body of under-represented or disadvantaged students admitted by other universities.
- 3.4 We will continue to evaluate the impact of our activities insofar as UCAS data policies allow, and have recently subscribed to the Higher Education Application Tracker (HEAT) service<sup>18</sup> which we hope will give us greater insight into the wider impact of our outreach work.
- 3.5 Since the University exceeds national measures in relation to retention and student success and has a strong record in relation to progression, the targets that it sets for itself will continue to focus primarily on outreach and admissions (see Section 5).

## 4. Fee Limits

- 4.1 The University's intention is to charge all Home and other EU undergraduates studying for a first degree, irrespective of course, the tuition fee<sup>19</sup> set at the amount determined by the Secretary of State as the higher rate under Part III of the Higher Education Act 2004.<sup>20</sup> For those who started their course after 1 September 2012, including those entering the University in October 2014, the fee will be £9,000. The rate will increase annually in accordance with rates announced by the Secretary of State. The same rate of tuition fee will apply to UK and other EU students admitted to the PGCE.

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<sup>12</sup> Destination of Leavers (DLHE) 2012-13, <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/stats-dlhe>, Tables F and K.

<sup>13</sup> Analysis of relative employment outcomes for those students receiving an award through the Cambridge Bursary Scheme conducted by Cambridge Careers Service in February 2015.

<sup>14</sup> HESA Performance Indicators, [www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2064&Itemid=141](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2064&Itemid=141), Table 1

<sup>15</sup> [www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/achievable\\_target.html](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/achievable_target.html).

<sup>16</sup> [www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/behindtheheadlines/ethnic\\_representation\\_update.html](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/behindtheheadlines/ethnic_representation_update.html).

<sup>17</sup> The actual figure is likely to be higher; tracking is made difficult by the lack of a unique student identifier.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.highereducationaccesstracker.org.uk/>.

<sup>19</sup> Also known as the "University Composition Fee".

<sup>20</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/8/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/8/contents).

- 4.2 Those undergraduates who are undertaking an Erasmus year or an overseas year of study as part of their undergraduate course will be charged a fee at the maximum we are permitted to charge. Subject to approval by the University, that is expected to be £1,350.
- 4.3 Any student deemed to be continuing studies that were commenced before 1 September 2012 will be subject to the fee regime applicable to pre-2012 entrants.
- 4.4 It is estimated that by 2016-17 (ie the point at which it is expected that almost all undergraduate students will have been admitted under the new system introduced in 2012) and subject to any controls operated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), approximately 10,000 undergraduate students and 400 PGCE students admitted to the University will be paying the higher rate of tuition fee. This would produce an additional fee income above the standard rate of c£30.8 million.

## 5. Expenditure on Additional Access and Retention Measures

- 5.1 The University has a strong commitment to widening participation. The University therefore intends to commit to expenditure on access measures at a higher level, as suggested in guidance from OFFA (see 5.4 below).
- 5.2 Until 2011-12 all expenditure from additional fee income on access measures by the University of Cambridge was focussed on delivering financial support through bursary provision, at an annual cost of £5.8 million, or 29.2% of fee income above the standard rate.<sup>21</sup> From 2012-13 a proportion of fee income was specifically allocated additionally for the conduct of outreach activities.
- 5.3 We do not intend to make any changes to our existing bursary scheme for 2015-16. Whilst mindful of OFFA guidance on this subject, we believe that, in addition to the positive effect that our bursary scheme has on attracting applications to the University, it is right to provide financial support to students with less means to enable their full participation in the student experience. This too is an important aspect of social mobility. We have also taken full account of student feedback in the formulation of the present scheme. Last year students confirmed that they do not want to see a reduction in bursary levels.<sup>22</sup>

### Focus On: Bursary Provision

In January 2015 the University sent a questionnaire to every current recipient of an award through the Cambridge Bursary Scheme surveying their attitudes towards bursary provision both generally and at the University of Cambridge. A total of 856 responses were received, representing 40% of the total.

Of those students from low income backgrounds (as defined by eligibility for Free School meals whilst in secondary school), 20.6% said that they would not have gone to university if university bursaries had been unavailable, 43.1% said that the bursary offered was a deciding or very important factor in their choice of institution, and 44.1% said that without a bursary they could not continue their studies.

- 5.4 It should be noted that the level of expenditure on outreach activity outlined in this agreement is supplemented from substantial funding through other sources, and will be further supported by funds previously allocated to fee waivers through the National Scholarship Programme. We therefore believe our commitment in this area to be both considerable and appropriate (see Section 6).

<sup>21</sup> As reported in the 2009-10 annual monitoring statement returned to OFFA in January 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Agreed by the UAC Cambridge Bursary Schemes Steering Group.

- 5.5 It is estimated that under the new arrangements and by 2016-17, the total expenditure by the University of Cambridge on access measures from additional undergraduate fee income will amount to approximately £9.5 million per annum, or c32.0% of fee income above the standard rate. In line with advice provided by OFFA, we further estimate that 10% of additional PGCE fee income will also be spent on access measures.
- 5.6 Overall, the collegiate University will, even with the higher fee, still be meeting out of its own resources almost half the real annual cost of c£16,000 of educating an undergraduate at Cambridge and thereby benefiting every UK and EU student at the University, regardless of background.

## 6. Additional Access Measures

### Outreach

- 6.1 The University of Cambridge aims to attract the best and brightest students in the UK, regardless of background, and already engages in an extensive range of outreach activities to support this objective. Outreach is delivered collectively and individually by the Cambridge Admissions Office, the Colleges, the Faculties and Departments, and the Cambridge University Students' Union. Activity falls into two principal categories: engagement designed to encourage applications to Cambridge from groups presently under-represented; and general aspiration-raising activity on behalf of the sector.

#### Focus On: Collaborative Outreach

Much of our outreach work is delivered in collaboration with other higher education institutions, schools and colleges, and third-party organisations, and we will continue to support this work.

Each year the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge take [Student Conferences](#) to stadia in 8 locations across the UK, and engage with c8500 highly able students and c980 teachers from c680 schools. These events ensure that geography is no barrier to exploring what the two institutions have to offer. This year the two institutions have additionally secured funding through HEFCEs [National Networks for Collaborative Outreach](#) initiative to enhance the outreach work it delivers in every local authority in the UK.

The Russell Group Widening Participation Association has provided a forum for collaborative work across leading universities for many years. As well as providing peer support for senior WP staff, the group plans and delivers collaborative activity including the biennial Teachers' Conference and practitioner networks.

Our [HE+](#) project has led to the creation of multi-school consortia in 14 locations across the UK, and engages over 2000 students from more than 70 schools annually. Closer to home, the HE Partnership project is a collaborative initiative which builds upon the legacy of Aimhigher in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in partnership between the University and several other HEIs in the region and beyond, which have in the past included the Universities of Bedfordshire, East Anglia, Anglia Ruskin and Derby.

The collegiate University also has a long tradition of working collaboratively with third party organisations such as The Sutton Trust, Teach First, and more recently Villiers Park. See 6.5 below for more information.

- 6.2 The University works with a number of specific under-represented and disadvantaged groups across the UK in order to raise aspiration and to improve access to higher education. These include children in care; students eligible (or previously eligible) for free school meals; black, Asian and minority ethnicity students; mature learners; students educated in further education colleges; and bright students in schools and colleges which have not historically sent students to the University of

Cambridge. These and other initiatives are described in more detail in our publication 'Raising Aspirations: our commitment to Outreach'<sup>23</sup>

- 6.3 Students in each of these groups (and their parents and advisers) are supported through a national programme of school visits and events which are delivered by the Cambridge Colleges using the Area Links Scheme,<sup>24</sup> as well as through summer schools and taster events delivered by the Cambridge Admissions Office, the Cambridge Colleges, University Faculties and Departments and the Cambridge University Students' Union.
- 6.4 Until 2012, outreach activity was funded primarily from time-limited sources including external sponsorship, philanthropic donation, government grants and from similarly limited national initiatives such as Gifted and Talented Excellence Hubs and Aimhigher. Since 2012 the collegiate University has allocated a proportion of additional fee income to underpin and develop outreach activity. The University will also undertake to divert the funding that it had previously allocated to the National Scholarship Programme (which ends in 2014-15) to support outreach work. In consequence, by 2016-17 outreach funding associated with the additional fee income will amount to circa £3.3m per year.
- 6.5 Through this funding the collegiate University undertakes to:
- increase the number of places offered on events with demonstrable impact, particularly summer schools, teachers events and higher education 'taster' days;
  - preserve the legacy of Aimhigher work as it relates to Cambridge through a programme of engagement with younger students in and around Cambridgeshire in partnership with local secondary schools, colleges and other higher education institutions in the region (including Anglia Ruskin University);
  - develop initiatives to engage with students in state schools across the UK to encourage them to choose appropriate subject combinations and make applications to selective higher education institutions;
  - continue to develop collaborative and longer-term outreach work with other HEIs and third party organisations;
  - resource efforts to ensure that our PGCE intake reflects the undergraduate population from which we recruit, and to build better networks of graduate teachers to facilitate wider outreach activity.

### **Focus On: Longer Term and Younger Age Outreach**

The University recognises that attempts to widen access to highly selective institutions are limited by the size of the current pool of suitably qualified students from under-represented or disadvantaged backgrounds, and that in order to increase the size of the pool the sector must make efforts to enhance the educational trajectory of younger students through longer term programmes.

A number of the initiatives delivered by the University and by individual Colleges have been developed for this reason. Our programme that focusses on communities with high proportions of black, Asian and minority ethnicity students ('Insight') engages students throughout Years 9 to 11 to develop an understanding of the range of subject choices available in higher education.

(continued on next page)

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/files/publications/raising\\_aspirations.pdf](http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/files/publications/raising_aspirations.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/area-links>

In partnership with the Sutton Trust we have recently launched the ‘[Sutton Scholars](#)’ programme in East Anglia for students in Years 9 to 11 to try and address some of the particular challenges faced by young people living in rural and coastal areas. Currently five schools around Kings Lynn and six around Great Yarmouth, all with below average GCSE attainment, have enthusiastically engaged with the programme. In Hastings, East Sussex, we are sponsoring a [Villiers Park Scholars Programme](#) to give the most able students in Years 10 to 13 from a coastal area of low aspiration the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Cambridge Colleges individually engage in a number of initiatives which support the activities of organisations such as the Brilliant Club and the Social Mobility Foundation, and several Colleges run programmes which engage students in primary schools.

The University also has a long standing commitment to public engagement through its [Science Festival](#) and the work of the Museums which reaches a wide range of age groups including primary and early secondary school children. In 2015 the Science Festival was comprised of 300 events and reached nearly 45,000 people.

- 6.6 Such work will be focussed on suitably qualified students from under-represented or disadvantaged groups, or from schools and colleges with low rates of progression to Cambridge and other selective higher education institutions. Events will be monitored annually in order to determine outcomes as far as is practicable, and to develop our objectives (see Section 8).
- 6.7 The collegiate University already uses contextual data to support its outreach activity and admissions process.<sup>25</sup> For example, students from low participation backgrounds or whose education has been significantly disrupted or disadvantaged through health or personal problems, disability or difficulties with schooling are invited to draw their circumstances to the attention of the Colleges through the Extenuating Circumstances Form. The University will continue to conduct research into the factors affecting admission and the role which contextual data might usefully play in selection.

#### **Retention**

- 6.8 The collegiate University provides unusually individualised and intensive support to its students. Weekly supervisions involve very small groups and all undergraduates have a Director of Studies in their College who closely manages their academic progress as well as a personal Tutor to advise and support them on pastoral issues. College based support is complemented by lectures, seminars, and practical classes, organised by Faculties and Departments which are increasingly specialised in the later years of the course. Students benefit from high-quality College accommodation which is available to all undergraduates for at least three years of each course, and also from extensive medical and counselling support. All of this contributes to an unusually high academic attainment and low drop-out rate – with no significant differential between students admitted from low participation neighbourhoods and the rest of the cohort - but is delivered at significant cost. Retention rates will be kept under review as the University responds to the demands of an increasingly diverse student body.

#### **Financial Support for Students**

- 6.9 The University is committed to the principle that no publicly-funded UK student should be deterred from applying to an undergraduate course at the University of Cambridge because of financial considerations, and that no such student should have to leave because of financial difficulties.
- 6.10 The University plans to give all UK undergraduate students in receipt of a full government maintenance grant (ie from households with an income of £25,000 or less) financial support of £3,500 per year (£5,600 for mature students<sup>26</sup>) in the form of a maintenance bursary.<sup>27</sup> Students in receipt of partial maintenance grants (ie from households with incomes of between £25,000 and £42,620) will be offered support of up to £3,500 on a tapering basis.<sup>28</sup> This support will cost approximately £6.3

<sup>25</sup> For further information see [www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/info/contextualdata.html](http://www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/info/contextualdata.html)

<sup>26</sup> Mature students for the purposes of financial support will be defined as (a) studying for a first degree, (b) 21 or over at the start of the course and (c) resident in Cambridge all year round.

<sup>27</sup> Note that we will take into account any funding secured from other public sources (for example the NHS and funding made available from UK devolved administrations) when assessing eligibility and amounts to be awarded.

<sup>28</sup> We have chosen to link our provision to government support arrangements; this will be reviewed should these arrangements change significantly.

million per annum by 2016-17. Students from elsewhere in the EU will be entitled to similar support subject to proper demonstration of equivalent household income.

**Figure 1: Summary of Undergraduate Financial Measures**

Household Income	Support Package
Below £25,000 pa	A bursary of £3,500 per year.
Between £25,000 and £42,620	A bursary of up to £3,500 per year.

- 6.11 The University will use the Higher Education Bursaries and Scholarships System (HEBSS) to inform the process of allocating fee waivers and maintenance bursaries.
- 6.12 The financial support package described above will be reviewed each year and may be subject to change to ensure that intended outcomes are achieved.
- 6.13 Almost all students admitted to the PGCE programme at Cambridge are entitled to government training bursaries. The University will therefore not be making additional bursary awards to PGCE students.

## 7. Targets and Milestones

- 7.1 The University will continue to encourage applications from well-qualified applicants from groups that are currently under-represented and to admit a greater proportion of them within the framework of our admission policy and without compromising entry standards. Experience demonstrates that outreach activity (particularly that focussed on younger age groups, as advocated in OFFA guidance) will not be reflected in the composition of the student population for some years.
- 7.2 The University recognises the value of HESA performance indicators and benchmarks, but notes that the benchmarks have severe limitations in a Cambridge context in that they take insufficient account of the University's entrance requirements, both in terms of subject combinations and levels of attainment.<sup>29</sup>
- 7.3 Guidance from the Office for Fair Access sets out three key areas to be addressed by Access Agreements. These are outreach, admissions and retention. Accordingly the University proposes to measure its progress against four corresponding targets:
- to admit UK resident students from UK state sector schools and colleges so that they fall within a range of 62-64% of the total intake, reaching the top of that range by 2019-20;
  - to admit UK resident students from quintiles 1 and 2 of the Participation Of Local Areas (POLAR)<sup>30</sup> classification so that they fall within the range 10-13% of the total intake, reaching the top of that range by 2019-20;
  - to maintain our record of retention, with the rate of non-continuation in HE following year of entry to be 2.1% or less;
  - to offer a commitment to the minimum number of places available on summer schools at the University.

<sup>29</sup> [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/research/](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/research/)

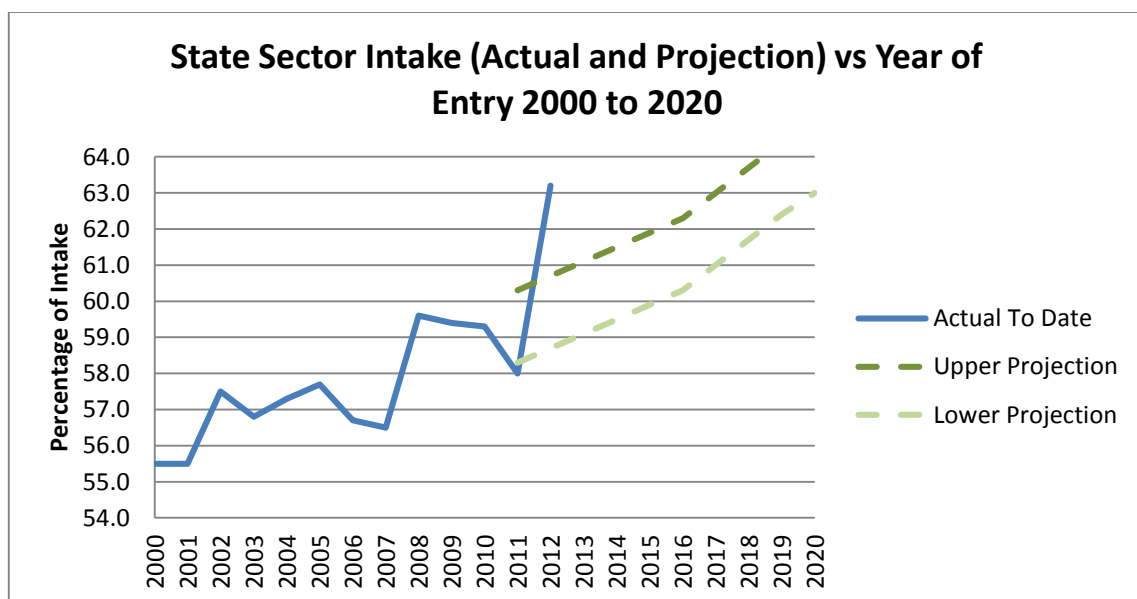
<sup>30</sup> <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/POLAR/>



- 7.4 The University has selected the four targets described above because they are measurable, do not rely on information which is unavailable (or inconsistently available) at the point of application, and are possible to influence without compromising either the principle of needs-blind admissions, or entry standards.
- 7.5 We will nonetheless continue to consider such other data as is made available by UCAS and HESA and its usefulness in measuring our progress. In particular we commit to reviewing these targets during 2015-16, and to developing additional targets for inclusion in the 2017-18 access agreement, subject to approval by OFFA.

#### Proportion of Intake from State Schools

- 7.6 The University's principal objective is to increase the proportion of our UK undergraduate intake from schools in the UK state sector.
- 7.7 Research conducted by the University<sup>31</sup> suggests that the proportion of students nationally educated at state schools securing examination grades in subject combinations and achievement level that reflect our entrance requirements has risen slightly since our original assessment in 2011<sup>32</sup>. The University's new objective therefore is for 62-64% (was 61-63%) of students admitted to be from state sector schools and colleges, making annual progress and reaching 64% by 2019-20. As noted at Section 2.6 above, government policy may have a bearing on this objective.
- 7.8 The graph below shows progress since 2000 and the upper and lower projections allowing for a 1.0% fluctuation either side of the planned position.



#### Proportion of Intake By POLAR3 Quintile

- 7.9 Currently HESA performance indicators and other national datasets relating to socio-economic background do not take adequate account of the entry requirements of individual institutions. Whilst they take some account of attainment, they do not do so in sufficient detail for highly selective institutions such as Cambridge where the average candidate admitted has 2.5 A\* grades with specific subject entry requirements.
- 7.10 Nonetheless the University recognises the directional value of measures such as POLAR. Previously we have set a target in relation to POLAR 3 quintile 1 (known as low participation neighbourhoods).

<sup>31</sup>[www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/achievable\\_target2015.html](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/achievable_target2015.html)

<sup>32</sup>[www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/achievable\\_target.html](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/admissions/research/achievable_target.html)

Data suggests however that the collegiate University is already near the limit of what is possible against that measure at current levels of attainment in schools, and so has broadened its focus to include quintile 2. Our objective is for the proportion of students admitted from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 to fall within the range of 10-13%, making annual progress and reaching 13% by 2019-20. We will however aim to maintain admissions for low participation neighbourhoods at between 3-4% in any given year.

### **Retention**

- 7.11 The extensive support offered by the Cambridge collegiate system ensures that the University has one of the best rates of student retention in the sector (currently 98.8%<sup>33</sup>). Nonetheless, increased levels of fee debt present significant challenges that are difficult to predict. A secondary objective will therefore be to ensure that the University maintains its position in relation to the HESA benchmark on non-continuation of full time degree entrants in higher education following year of entry. Taking an average of the five years from 2008-09 to 2012-13, that figure is 2.1%.

### **Minimum Number of Places on Summer Schools**

- 7.12 Research has shown that summer schools are a particularly effective and measurable mechanism for improving access to higher education. The Sutton Trust reports that around 95% of students attending its summer schools (all of whom are from state sector schools and colleges with relatively low rates of progression to selective universities) go on to attend higher education.<sup>34</sup> The University's own data demonstrates proven success in relation to subsequent admission to Cambridge of summer school attendees over several admission cycles. The University will therefore continue to offer a minimum of 600 places per year on its programmes, making the Cambridge summer schools programme one of the largest and most ambitious in the UK.

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements**

- 8.1 The University will continue its policy of making admissions statistics publicly available, through its web-site. Those statistics include data on the number of applications and acceptances by school type, region, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic classification.
- 8.2 The University's adherence to this agreement and its progress in reaching the objectives indicated above will be monitored through the University's Undergraduate Admissions Committee (jointly chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Secretary to the Colleges' Senior Tutors Committee) which report to the principal University and Collegiate bodies. The Committee will take advice from the Admissions Forum, the intercollegiate body charged with managing undergraduate admissions and delivering agreed targets and objectives. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee will annually review application, offer and admission trends, particularly in respect of currently under-represented groups. It will also keep under review, and advise as necessary on the amendment of admissions and recruitment processes that have a bearing on securing a wide and diverse pool of well-qualified applicants. Each of these groups includes student representation.
- 8.3 The Cambridge bursary scheme and other financial support will be reviewed by the Undergraduate Admissions Committee through a specially tasked Cambridge Bursary Scheme Sub Group, which will monitor the operation and impact of the scheme using annual reports and data analysis, and make recommendations as appropriate.
- 8.4 Scrutiny of outreach activities will be undertaken by the Outreach Steering Group (reporting to the Undergraduate Admissions Committee) which will co-ordinate and prioritise those activities and review their effectiveness. The success of outreach activities (aside from those which are web-based or of a general aspiration-raising nature) will be monitored through annual analyses of qualitative

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<sup>33</sup> HESA performance indicators 2011-12, [www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=2064&Itemid=141](http://www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2064&Itemid=141), Table 3a

<sup>34</sup> [www.suttontrust.com/our-work/research/item/ten-year-review-of-sutton-trust-summer-schools/](http://www.suttontrust.com/our-work/research/item/ten-year-review-of-sutton-trust-summer-schools/)

evaluation and attendee and application data. It will not be possible to measure routinely the wider benefit to the HE sector of Cambridge activity until measures are put in place at a national level to assist with quantitative evaluation. It is our intention to embed or grow those initiatives which make demonstrable progress towards their objectives.

- 8.5 The University has identified specific groups that may be particularly affected by the new financial arrangements and so has prepared an Equality Assurance Assessment in line with BIS guidance. The University will continue to consider any potential disproportionate or adverse impact on protected groups (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) periodically via the groups described above. An Equality Assurance Assessment in relation to the University's widening participation activities has been completed and approved by the University Equality Assurance Assessment Review Group to ensure that it fulfils its legal obligations in this area. It should be noted that national data regarding several protected characteristics does not exist, and so no comparisons can be made in any such assessment.
- 8.6 Post-entry reviews will be undertaken by continued analyses of retention rates and examination performances of relevant groups in comparison with those of the overall cohorts.
- 8.7 We will continue to monitor the ease with which students make the transition from school to university on a subject-by-subject basis. The University has in recent years invested in a Transkills Project to assist with this transition. The personal attention paid to the needs of students through the Colleges will continue to enable prompt resolution of any individual difficulties.

## **9. Provision of Information to Students**

- 9.1 The University will ensure that full details of its access measures including a detailed description of financial support arrangements are published in future editions of our Undergraduate Prospectus, finance guides and on the web.<sup>35</sup> Advice and information will continue to be given to students during school and college visits and at Higher Education fairs, conferences and open days.
- 9.2 We shall provide in a timely manner such information as the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Student Loans Company (SLC) reasonably require to populate their applicant-facing web services.

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<sup>35</sup> See [www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/finance](http://www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/finance) and [www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/cambridgebursary](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/cambridgebursary)

**Table 7 - Targets and milestones**

Institution name: University of Cambridge

Institution UKPRN: 10007788

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

Reference 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)
						2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
T16a_01	Other statistic - State School (please give details in the next column)	Proportion of UK undergraduate intake from schools in the UK state sector per admissions cycle	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	59.3%	61.3%	62.0%	62.7%	63.4%	64.0%	Our baseline is set at 2010-11 as per our original access agreement. Note that these figures are for each admission cycle rather than for year of entry. In any given year there may be statistical variation of +/- 1.0%.
T16a_02	Other statistic - Location (please give details in the next column)	POLAR3 Quintiles 1 and 2	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	9.6%	10.1%	10.8%	11.5%	12.2%	13.0%	Our baseline data is set at 2010-11 to be consistent with our other targets. Note that these figures are for each admission cycle rather than for year of entry. In any given year there may be statistical variation of +/- 1.0%.
T16a_03	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (All, full-time, first degree entrants)		No	Other (please give details in Description column)	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	As agreed with the Director for Fair Access the target is to maintain the average figure recorded in HESA PIs for the 5 year period to 2012-13 (the most up to date data available at time of drafting)

**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.

Reference 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)
						2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
T16b_01	Outreach / WP activity (summer schools)	Minimum number of places offered each year	No	Other (please give details in Description column)	400	600	600	600	600	600	Our baseline is set at 2010-11 as per our original access agreement.

**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.