

## Reaseheath College Access Agreement 2012/13 & 2013/14

### Background

Reaseheath College is a specialist Land Based Further Education College. Higher education at Reaseheath College (RHC) was indirectly funded via two higher education institution (HEI) partners: the University of Chester (UoC) and Harper Adams University College (HAUC), making a higher education student population at Reaseheath of approx. 700FTE's; the funding for these places was secured via both partner institutions.

However, the partnership with HAUC has matured and after recent discussions with HAUC and HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council England), a decision was taken to transfer new regime numbers to Reaseheath College; we can confirm that 80 SLN have been transfer to Reaseheath College for September 2012. In addition, Reaseheath will also receive a further 25 FTE to account for Top Up provision in 2012/13 making a total population of 105 FTE for 2012/13.

FTE 2012/13	Price group	Level	Mode
105	B	UG	FT

We anticipate the transfer of the following SNC for 2013/14:

FTE 2013/14	Price Group	Level	Mode
80	B	UG	FT

HAUC have submitted an office of fair access agreement (OFFA) which includes the numbers allocated to Reaseheath for 2012/13. Reaseheath will honour the commitment stated in Harper Adams University College's Office of Fair Access agreement for 2012/13 as these students applied to Reaseheath College while this agreement was in place. **Please see HAUC 2012/13 OFFA for full details.**

Likewise, the University of Chester has submitted an OFFA agreement that includes students studying at Reaseheath College in 2012/13, but they remain UoC numbers. There is no intention to move away from the partnership with the University of Chester, so this arrangement will continue.

The intention of this access agreement is to support the numbers that will be transferred to Reaseheath from HAUC for 2012/13 and going forward to cover students studying at Reaseheath in 2013/14.

### Fees for the 2012/13 Cohort

Programme Title	Full time	Part time
Full time BSc (all programme titles)	BSc £7,500	£5,628
Full time Foundation Degree Equine, Agriculture, Adventure Sports, Rural Events Management, Horticulture,	FdSc £7,500	£5,628
Foundation Degree Countryside Management and Engineering	No full time option available	£3,500

### **Fees for the 2013/14 cohort**

Reaseheath College, has agreed the following annual tuition fee rates for UK and EU new entrants joining full time/sandwich undergraduate programmes in 2013/14:

<b>Programmes at Reaseheath College</b>	<b>Full time</b>	<b>Part time</b>
<b>Full Time BSc programmes</b>	<b>BSc £7,500</b>	<b>£5,250</b>
<b>Full time Foundation Degree programmes Agriculture, Horticulture, Equine, Sport and Food</b>	<b>FdSc £7,500</b>	<b>£5,250</b>
<b>Full time First degree Business, Events</b>	<b>FdSc £6,000</b>	
<b>Engineering and Countryside</b>		<b>FdSc £3,500</b>
<b>BSc Top up programmes</b>	<b>£7,500</b>	
<b>One year full-time sandwich placement year</b>	<b>£500</b>	<b>£500</b>

Students who commence a foundation degree programme in 2013/14, which includes a one year sandwich placement, will normally undertake the sandwich placement in 2014/15. Students studying during their sandwich year through Reaseheath College will be subject to a fee of £500 which is significantly below both the basic fee of £3,000 and the maximum fee of £5,625.

We anticipate that approximately 80 new full-time students, plus 20 AABs will join the first year of either a first degree or foundation degree at Reaseheath College in 2013/14, although this clearly depends on the Student Number Control allocation for new entrants. We anticipate that approximately 50 FTE new students will enrol on part-time courses at Reaseheath College, including those who are sponsored by employers.

This access agreement will be renewed annually. However, we anticipate that tuition fee levels for 2013/14 entrants will be uplifted each year in line with inflationary increases announced by the government. Due to changes in partnership arrangements, it is a possibility that fees will be further reviewed by Reaseheath in the future.

The associated documentation prepared in line with the approved template indicates:

- the estimated numbers of full-time students at each fee level, including fees at £6,000 and below;
- the estimated number of regulated part-time students for whom we anticipate the fee will exceed £4,500 in an academic year;

Our estimated fee income above the basic level for full-time means that the part-time fee levels indicated above are the maximum that a student would pay (i.e. up to 75% of a full-time study load), although many would typically pay a lower fee, dependent on their study load.

Reaseheath College will not charge any part-time student more than £6,750 in an academic year, in accordance with the fees regulations, outlined by OFFA.

## **Bursaries and additional financial information**

### **National Scholarship Programme (NSP)**

For 2012/13, as we have now been granted our own provisional National Scholarship Programme (NSP) in order to assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds with the costs of their higher education studies. this has been calculated as 5 NSP awards, or £15,000. Because we are intending to charge over the minimum threshold for our fees, our expectation (in accordance with OFFA) is that the college will match this on a ratio of 1:1, or an institutional contribution of a further 5 NSP awards, equalling 10 awards in total. This award will cover the cost of awards in each subsequent year of study, excluding the placement year, of £1,700 for each NSP award holder.

In order to be considered for an NSP award, students must have a declared household income of £25,000 or less, undertake at least 30 credits of study and meet other specified selection criteria (available on the College's website). NSP awards will not be available to students who are ordinarily resident in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Part time and European Union (EU) nationals are not eligible for the maintenance element of an NSP award. Full eligibility criteria for NSP awards have been developed by the HAUC College and Reaseheath and are published on the Website of Reaseheath College. In essence, the criteria are that students who meet the household income criteria will be ranked on their academic achievements on entry, with the highest achieving students made an award.

New full time students admitted to Reaseheath College in 2013/14 and who are selected for an NSP award will receive a £3,000 reduction in the cost of on-campus residential accommodation in the 2013/14 academic year only. NSP students, who are not resident in on-campus accommodation in 2013/14, will receive a fee waiver of £3,000, reducing the cost of tuition fees in 2013/14 only. Full time NSP students who continue their studies with Reaseheath College in 2014/15 and beyond will receive a scholarship of £1700 in each subsequent year of study, except the sandwich placement year, provided that the household income of that student remains £25,000 or less and the student remains in full time study. An NSP award student, who changes from full time study in 2013/14 to part time study in any subsequent year, will receive a scholarship in those years of part time study proportionate to their full time study load.

Students admitted to part time programmes at Reaseheath College in 2013/14 and who are selected for an NSP award, will receive a fee waiver which is proportionate to their full time study load. For example, a student studying 30 credits of study (0.25 FTE) in 2013/14 will be eligible for a fee waiver of £750, a student studying 60 credits (0.5 FTE) will be eligible for a fee waiver of £1,500, while a student studying 90 credits (0.75 FTE) will be eligible for a fee waiver of £2,250. Part time NSP students who continue their studies in 2014/15 and beyond will receive a scholarship in each subsequent year of study, proportionate to their full time study load, provided that the household income of that student remains £25,000 or less.

## **Other Financial Support**

From 2012/13, Reaseheath College will award an annual non-repayable scholarship of £1,000 to those new entrants with a household income of £0 - £25,000 and who are not in receipt of a NSP award.

Scholarships will be paid to students, by cheque or BACS, in two equal instalments. The first payment will be made in February and the second payment in May.

Students who receive a scholarship, including an NSP award, in the first year of study will continue to receive a £1,000 scholarship for the remaining years of study at Reaseheath College, provided that they remain registered on a full time course and continue to meet the criteria for the award of a scholarship. Students will not normally be eligible for a scholarship during the sandwich placement year.

## **Assessment of Performance**

The college will continue to promote and develop a range of activities and initiatives to attract underrepresented groups to study at the college.

- The college currently works with over 20 schools in Cheshire and Warrington providing vocational programmes for 14-16 year olds, where pupils attend college one day per week over the academic year. 2011/12 300 young people took part. The college encourages young people to think about progression routes.
- The college has an Access to Higher Education course to engage learners from non-traditional backgrounds. The fees are subsidized by the college to attract potential students to this programme; there are currently 80 students on this programme 2011/12.
- The college continues to develop its curriculum, particularly Foundation Degrees, with industry to enhance delivery and widen participation to those learners who seek a more vocational/kinaesthetic learning experience.
- The college holds taster days to allow prospective students to opportunity to sample curriculum areas and the diverse provisions they provide
- For students that are moving from FE to HE the college has `bridging modules and holds bridging events and summer camps, the intention being to assist student with the move from further education to higher education. There are cultural differences and often students need to support to successfully navigate this change.
- The college provides additional learning support and counselling services for students
- Where ever possible the delivery of the programmes/ timetabling is managed with the needs of industry or/ and students. For example on programmes where there is a large number of mature students delivery will where possible accommodate child care responsibilities. Where a specific industry has a need for employee and this meets the college's requirements for work experience placements we will accommodate this within timetabling to be able to release student's at the most advantageous time.

- The college has various protocols in place as part of the wider quality assurance and compliance to raise student success rates and retention. This is an improving picture at Reaseheath.
- The college retains an Aim Higher co-ordinator who supports individuals preparing for higher education both internally and externally

### **Outreach & Retention**

Reaseheath College's *Access to HE* programme is considered to be one of the highest performing transition to HE level programme in the country, achieving above national benchmarks in the last three consecutive years. The achievement rate of learners enrolled for 2011/12 was 94%, with 80% of completers progressing onto a HE level programme thereafter.

The college's Aim Higher/Widening Participation Officer course manages the Access to HE programme, providing under-represented groups with advice on transferable skills for employment and academic study skills which they will utilise in the workplace. The characteristics nurtured under this provision allows students who would not otherwise have had an opportunity to achieve a post-compulsory education, a springboard to higher education.

The college has recently appointed a HE Learning Support Co-ordinator, who will be responsible for supporting students with physical and/or learning needs, to help them increase their self-esteem and academic success, particularly in relation to concessional support for examinations.

In addition to this, the college has also appointed a Curriculum Area Manager for Higher Education, who will oversee quality assurance practices within all the HE curriculum areas across college. This role will encourage standardisation across all academic departments delivering HE, allowing for an enhanced student experience through transparent course documentation, enabling staff to meet student expectations and generating increased student satisfaction through promoting a HE culture/ethos.

### **Expenditure on additional access measures**

At Reaseheath College, there is an intention to commence new initiatives designed to support students progressing from further education into higher education and also to provide additional support to first year students on foundation degree programmes in order to further improve progression rates into the second year of study. These initiatives include new initiatives for the delivery of Learner Support and in further supporting the delivery of the curriculum.

Additionally, further education staff have been involved in examining how best to support students through the transition from FE to HE. These initiatives will support our dual aims aim of increasing the number of mature students admitted each year and improving the retention rates of those students.

The college plans on spending approximately 23% of the additional income generated from fees above £6,000 on widening participation initiatives. However as this is the first year that the college will be directly funded it is conscious that there should be no apparent drop in student facing

services, services will be monitored and a greater proportion of income for 2013/14 will be reallocation of duties to better accommodate student needs and widening participation initiatives; should the need arise.

### **How does this data relate to institutional access agreement expenditure (Tables 4b/c)?**

In accordance with our allocation of 105 FTEs for 2012/13, it is envisaged that 100% of these learners will be paying in excess of the stipulated £6,000 threshold for direct-funded students. This generates a total of £157,500, of which approximately 23% will be spend on widening participation initiatives, predominantly linked to key provisions such as marketing, learning support/guidance and course management. This equates to a projected figure of approximately £36,225.

In conjunction with the monetary proportion of newly appointed HE roles required for Widening participation activity/ supporting HE students (approximately £44,535.75), the total sum for institutional access agreement expenditure is £80,760.75.

Approximately £36,785 of the monetary proportion of associated job roles required for Widening participation activity/ supporting HE students will be utilised for *outreach* purposes, such as raising aspirations and attainment among potential HE applicants. The remaining £8,750.75 will be channelled towards *retention* and the support of our current HE learners in improving academic success and employment engagement for career opportunities after graduation.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The Head of Higher Education, The Director of Quality and the Director of Finance will be responsible for the delivery of this agreement and the college is committed to monitor compliance and progress against the milestones. Progress will be measured throughout the year regarding key milestones, as part of the college's normal quality compliance/ assurance processes. The major targets /milestones relate to data collection and analysis. Progress being measured against targets set will be reported in an annual report to the colleges Higher Education academic board. The report will include:

- Financial data summarising recruitment, awards made to students via bursaries and awards.
- Outreach activities that have been undertaken during the year
- Progress made against institutional milestones and objectives relating to student success, progression and widening participation
- The College's Single Equality Scheme aims to proactively embed equality in the culture and systems of our organisation by ensuring that policy making, service delivery and employment practice are all equality orientated. A proactive and systematic approach to undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) is in place for existing and new policies.

### **Consulting with students**

A preliminary draft of this agreement was shared with members of the Student Association at Reaseheath College through a routine meeting with the senior staff. Particular attention was given to the balance of available expenditure committed to supporting student success and financial support, and to the basis upon which financial support might best be organised. Subsequent input will come through student representative involvement in the Academic Board meetings at where this agreement is formally considered, approved and monitored.

### **Institutional milestones and objectives**

- Maintain and improve baseline proportion of students from low participation groups or wards in 2011/12 this was 17.67% we have set a target for improvement to 19% by 2014/15
- Monitor the percentage of students receiving bursaries. Monitoring will be provisioned on an individual basis, but will be regularly discussed at academic board meetings
- Continue to develop widening participation initiatives and promote the benefits of higher education, by continuing and growing our outreach work. Data will be collated and monitored using information sectors such as progression data our L3 learners onto L4 qualifications (highlighting data such as geographical location and free school meal allocations);
- Improve the baseline of students with physical and or learning difficulties 2011/12 12.9% target of 14% by 2016/17. Learning support requirements will be closely monitored (and measured) through diagnostic/formative assessments; individual learning plans, DSA collaboration and enhanced tutorial provision via course managers
- Monitor progression for key groups such as Access to Higher Education programme, 2011/12 33 students from disadvantaged wards progressed to higher education. Progression will be monitored through the use of annual course reports, module evaluations, curriculum group meetings (FE-progression and HE -retention) and course committee meetings
- Continue to improve retention of students on higher education programmes. 2010/11 base line for student withdrawals was 17.3%. It is envisaged this will be reduced to 15% by 2016/17 through initiatives such as: enhanced course management support and tuition (HE Curriculum Area Manager role); tutorial and course file audits; learner voice provision in the form of student liaison meetings and course committee meetings; building on student survey responses and feedback; engagement with the VLE will also be enhanced, as well as meeting student expectations through increased monitoring of marketing materials, online prospectuses and course documentation
- Improve the proportion of non white students 2011/12 (1.86%) by 2016/17 to a target of 2.05% through widen HE provision to other catchment areas (geographically) as well as enhancing its brand name and reputation further afield (internationally) via increased marketing and student satisfaction

### **Provision of information to students and perspective students**

Information for students regarding financial information will be printed in the college's higher education prospectus. This information will also appear on the college web site. Illustrations of the net costs of study at Reaseheath will be included, including examples of living on site in halls of residence and the cost of living off campus. This information also appears in the college KIS.

Information is also included regarding support both academic and pastoral available at the college. For existing students the college has a dedicated student finance officer and proactive student services team that are housed in a bespoke building providing dedicated advice and guidance to existing students.

For perspective students, the college holds open days, taster courses, bridging courses and attends education fairs, schools and college career days and other events relevant to recruitment. At all these events printed information is available regarding the colleges position on tuition fees, the NSP and other forms of financial support.

Information regarding tuition fees and financial support available will be sent to all applicants receiving an offer of a place.

Perspective students seeking admission to courses are normally interviewed. During the applicants interview visit to Reaseheath College there is an opportunity to discuss financial support and what this is likely to be available from the institution.

All staff involved in recruitment and admissions will receive on going updates and training regarding tuition fees and scholarships. Information will also be made available on UCAS

The college provides IAG, Information, advice and guidance to perspective and existing students and is the holder of full MATRIX accreditation