



Keele  
University

## **Access Agreement**

2015/16

May 2014

**Keele University**  
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# 1 Introduction

1.1 Keele University is renowned for its exciting approach to Higher Education, beautiful campus, strong community spirit and excellent student life. Observing Keele's founding ethos of 'the pursuit of truth in the company of friends', the University is committed to the transformative capacity of education for individuals, communities and society and to the equality of opportunity.

1.2 Our University Mission is to provide a high quality educational experience for students shaped by outstanding research, contributing positively to social, environmental and economic agendas locally, nationally and internationally. As we seek moderate growth in our student population we will build upon our already successful work in recruiting and retaining students of high ability and potential from the broadest possible backgrounds.

1.3 The North Staffordshire area, namely the conurbations of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme, has some of the lowest levels of participation in Higher Education in the country. As a university that aims to engage fully with our community, we have been working with schools and colleges in the region to promote progression, participation and fair access for many years.

1.4 Keele generally continues to perform well in the HESA Performance Indicators, compared to its benchmark and the UK overall, on both Widening Participation and retention. Keele's percentage from under-represented groups has increased for all 3 indicators - State Schools or Colleges, NS-SEC, LPN. Over the past three year particularly good progress has been made in terms of increasing participation from Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPN); performance has increased from 12.8% to 14.1%, which remains well above Keele's benchmark. Keele's employment indicator (including further study) remains in 2012/13 at 93.0%, which is above its benchmark and the UK as a whole.

1.5 In 2012/13 the percentage of students graduating from Keele with a First or Upper Second Class degree was 67.5%, which is below its benchmark group (73.9%) and slightly below the UK average (67.9%). We recognise this is an area for improvement and we will continue to invest in work that aims to support student success and progression in 2015/16 and beyond.

1.6 During the last 12 months the University has continued to invest in both outreach and retention activities. We remain committed to delivering appropriate and targeted activities across these areas, whilst further developing ease of access to help and support throughout a student's interactions with the University, from the earliest engagements at Key Stage 2 through to Key Stage 5 transition projects, and on campus advice and support.

1.7 This 2015/16 Access Agreement provides the University with an opportunity to make explicit its strong and established commitment to supporting Widening Participation (WP) and the holistic student experience. We will continue to achieve this commitment by placing a significant emphasis upon the delivery of proven and effective outreach and access work, by offering valuable, relevant and targeted financial support, and by committing to the continued development and delivery of effective and valued services that improve retention and encourage student success.

1.8 This Agreement builds upon earlier Access Agreements and explicitly focuses on the development of activity and services to support students in the following broad areas:

- **Student Financial Support**
- **Outreach and Access**
- **Retention and Success**
- **Progression**

1.9 Whilst we recognise the importance of focusing our attention on the delivery of activity within these highlighted areas, the University believes in delivering a seamless approach when supporting students into, through and beyond Higher Education. As such, we will develop and refine existing, as well as planned, activity ensuring efficiencies are made. Access work will be delivered in partnership by colleagues working across our professional services teams and at different stages of the whole student lifecycle, details of which are in the sections that follow.

## **2 Student Consultation**

2.1 As part of the development of this Access Agreement we have consulted with both university staff across our three Faculties and within central services and Keele Students' Union (KeeleSU). Keele University has an excellent working relationship with its Students' Union and its role and influence in developing and, indeed, supporting the delivery of key aspects of our outreach, retention and progression activities is evidenced in this Agreement.

2.2 To ensure we took the views of our students into consideration in the production of this Access Agreement, we developed an Access Agreement Student Survey, which was sent to all current undergraduate students and generated 329 responses. We included questions that related to the whole student life cycle, from pre-entry guidance and support to how well prepared students feel for life after graduation.

2.3 Students from Widening Participation cohorts, particularly those who indicated that they were in receipt of the Keele Bursary (i.e. household income <£25,000) were invited to attend one of two focus groups in order to provide us both with their own personal experiences, and the views of their fellow students, as well as to provide us with proposals for how we should be working in the future to ensure that all students can experience University, should they wish, and that when they do they be presented with the best opportunities to develop, progress and succeed. The Vice President (Welfare) from Keele SU ran the Focus Groups, which were transcribed and the findings used to inform the development of this Agreement.

## **3 Fees, Student Numbers and Fee Income**

3.1 Keele proposes to charge a flat fee of **£9,000** for all home/EU students to all new entrants in 2015/16. We estimate a student intake in 2015/16 of 1,514 at this fee level. We will apply annually the permitted rise set out by the Government to maintain the fee level in real terms and advise students that their fee will rise in line with any permitted increases in the regulated fee.

## **4 Investment and Allocation**

4.1 Keele University has a history of performing up to and beyond its HESA benchmarks and has a strong reputation in outreach. The nature of the institution (pre-92, campus based, with full-time course dominance) means that a lower proportion of students from WP target groups study at Keele than is the sector average.

4.2 It is this analysis of the University’s position within the sector, which has led to the identification of circa **25%** additional fee income to be invested in the work outlined in this Access Agreement and for this funding to be split in 2015/16 as follows:

<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>Student Success</b>	<b>Progression</b>
<b>52%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>8%</b>

4.3 These additional tuition fee funds mean that we can continue to improve our strong record in outreach Widening Participation activity, whilst engaging in better-targeted retention and student success work.

## **5 Student Financial Support**

5.1 Keele University recognises the importance of providing targeted financial support to students in situations where it adds value to their experience at university, reduces debt, supports retention and limits the concerns associated with financial insecurity such as anxiety and stress.

5.2 We will survey our students about bursaries and scholarships annually and continue to work closely with the Students’ Union to ensure that our financial support has a strong evidence base. In line with recent developments in the sector, we are considering more effective means of delivering financial support packages to students.

5.3 These proposals are based on an estimated 2015/16 expenditure of £1,723,000 on direct financial support for all qualifying students.

5.4 The University has developed a financial proposal of bursaries, scholarships and other targeted financial support as follows:

### **5a) Keele University Bursary**

We want to ensure that students with the lowest household incomes have access to additional financial support. We will award a £1,000 Keele University Bursary per year to all English students who have a gross annual household income below £25,000 and who are eligible to receive a maximum maintenance grant or Special Support Grant from Student Finance England in 2015.

**Estimated Cost** £1,225,000 (c. £400,000 total estimated spend on new students)

### **5b) Keele Study Abroad Bursary**

As part of our commitment to providing an international opportunity as part of our curriculum, we wish to provide additional bursary support for students from our target groups to support them with the additional costs associated with studying abroad as part of one of our exchange schemes. We will guarantee a £1,000 Study Abroad Bursary to all eligible students with a household income below £25,000 who receive a full special support grant or maintenance grant.

**Estimated cost:** £20,000 for one year.

### **5c) Sandwich Year Courses**

The sandwich year fee is capped at £500. This applies to only a small number of students on BSc Human Biology, BSc Neuroscience and BSc Biochemistry.

### **5d) Care Leavers Bursary**

Keele will offer a progressive Care Leavers Bursary from £1,000 to £2,000 in the 3rd year for students who have been in care for at least six months consecutively over the age of 14.

**Estimated Cost** £22,500

#### **Exclusions and Additional Conditions:**

- The financial support in this Access Agreement applies to new entrants to Keele in 2015 that are eligible for student financial support and student loans via Student Finance England.
- Students normally resident (i.e. domiciled) in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will not be eligible for Keele bursaries and scholarships, since students domiciled in these countries are subject to funding arrangements which are likely to exclude them from having to find the full tuition fee.
- It is also proposed that we restrict bursaries to students in receipt of English student support.
- Foundation Year students will receive any support for which they qualify for the full 4 year duration of their course.
- Access to these student support packages are subject to successful progression, which in the case of students who repeat years will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- We may apply fee increases in line with the amount set by the Government each year.

### **5e) Keele Excellence Scholarships**

Keele awards Excellence Scholarships to students who attain excellent grades in their pre-entry qualifications. If eligible, students can receive both a Keele University Bursary of £1,000 and an Excellence Scholarship of up to £2,000 a year for each year of undergraduate study at Keele. The Scholarships are rewarded based on qualifications only, and a number of these will be awarded to students from a low income or low participation background. We include qualifications such as the BTEC Access to Higher Education Diploma, and other Level 3 BTEC and OCR awards.

### **5f) Keele Travel Fund**

In 2014/15 Keele proposes to establish a travel fund to support applicants from lower income backgrounds in attending recruitment events and current students with unexpected/high travel costs that are part of their course. This will be funded using carried-forward NSP underspend in the 2014/15 academic year as a pilot project and, if evaluated to be successful, the University will look to continue with the initiative in 2015/16.

#### **Evaluation of Financial Support:**

5.5 It is recognised that the University is investing heavily in financial support. A research project is ongoing to understand the impact of bursaries and scholarships on access, student retention, success and progression and a report will be produced in the autumn of 2014. We will not as yet

have longitudinal data relating to the impact on progression as we are only two years into the scheme but this is something that will be evaluated when the data is available.

5.6 Over the past year we have surveyed Keele applicants to better understand their feelings about financial support and its importance to them in accessing Higher Education. We have also included survey questions in the decliners' survey relating to the bursaries and scholarships offered by Keele and therefore have information we can use in planning for future years.

## **6) The Provision of Financial Information**

6.1 We recognise the importance of providing students, their supporters and other key stakeholders with relevant information, advice and guidance on tuition fees and the financial support available from Student Finance England and Keele University. We intend to make this information transparent, informative and readily accessible at appropriate points, in order that students are able to make informed, timely decisions in regard to their future destination of choice for Higher Education.

6.2 Information relating to the financial support provided by the University is provided generally through the University's website and is highlighted to all prospective students during key engagement activities such as campus visits, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) sessions in schools/colleges, and direct mailing to enquirers. Detailed information is made available in hard copy and electronic format for all applicants who receive an offer of a place.

6.3 During 2013/14, the University has enhanced the information on its website in relation to course costs. A new webpage has been developed which includes clear details about additional costs per course, such as field trips or travel to placements. In addition, costs related to printing/photocopying and binding and costs for graduation are clearly outlined.

6.4 In order to ensure that prospective students from all backgrounds are confident and well-informed about the costs of Higher Education and the financial support available, we offer a range of resources including booklets, trained 'Finance Specialist' Student Ambassadors, and talks on Open and Visit Days. Sessions are also provided to learners, carers and advisers in school and college settings.

6.5 In addition, the University has developed SAM (Student Advisory Model), accessible via [www.ask-sam.ac.uk](http://www.ask-sam.ac.uk) providing financial (and other) information for all students studying in England or applying to University (see section 9.30-1).

6.6 We plan to further enhance our support in relation to student financial information, advice and guidance and have identified additional resource to support three new posts sitting within Outreach and Student Support to focus on the provision of one-to-one money guidance and support to under-represented groups. These new posts are funded using NSP underspend and are time-limited to the 2014/15 academic year. In addition, a specific project has been identified which will provide, amongst other enhanced information, a web-based resource enabling students to calculate how much funding they will receive based on their circumstances. This pilot will be reviewed at the end of the 2014/15 academic year and, if successful, funding will be sought to continue with the work in 2015/16.

## **7 Outreach and Access**

7.1 As identified in our earlier Access Agreements, Keele University is committed to raising

aspirations and awareness amongst all potential student cohorts currently under-represented in Higher Education, to enable them to make informed and effective decisions regarding their further educational and career choices. Given the proven value of the current outreach and access work being undertaken this Access Agreement outlines our plans to further develop and strengthen the current offer in line with recommendations made by the recently published Strategy for Access and Student Success (April 2014).

- 7.2 As indicated in the Introduction, Keele generally performs well in the HESA Performance Indicators on Widening Participation compared to its benchmarks, and has therefore set challenging targets as shown in Table 7 of the Resource Plan (Targets and Milestones). We have found, however, that in the rapidly changing Higher Education environment these targets have become more difficult to achieve. We are, therefore, keeping them under regular review and will use an evidence-based approach to adjust or expand our outreach and access activities where review demonstrates that to be necessary.
- 7.3 The University has developed a ladder of engagement (Appendix A) which summarises our existing outreach schemes targeted at different groups including learners, parents/guardians and teachers/advisers.
- 7.4 Outreach work is strategically embedded across the University. Academic schools and faculties are supported by the central outreach team in the delivery of subject-specific outreach and, where appropriate, WP targeting. In 2013/14 OFFA-accountable funds have been made available to support targeted activity within academic schools, with additional investment in staffing planned over a two-year period to further develop outreach work aimed at Widening Participation.
- 7.5 The Faculty of Health has recently appointed a full time Faculty Outreach Administrator to support the Faculty's Outreach and Widening Participation Strategy. This will be monitored and, if successful, may be adopted by the other two faculties.

### **7a) Targeting of Outreach Activity**

- 7.6 Keele University aims to ensure that where resources are identified specifically to deliver Widening Participation activity, this activity is focused and meets, as a minimum, HEFCE targeting guidelines. Keele University intends to maximize the impact of Widening Participation activity by focusing resources on a target group of learners with the potential to benefit from Higher Education and who come from under-represented groups. We shall ensure best use of finite resources by more effective targeting of potential WP applicants.
- 7.7 We have recently established a travel fund to support students from WP cohorts in travelling to and from events and activities held at Keele, as we have recognised that, in previous years, travel costs have been a barrier to participation. Depending on the success of this scheme, we plan to continue with this approach in 2015/16.
- 7.8 Intensive learner activities, such as our residential Summer Schools, continue to be directly targeted at students from WP groups – which Keele has identified as:
- **young students from low socio-economic groups**
  - **learners from deprived or low participation postcode areas (POLAR3 and IMD)**
  - **disabled students**
  - **minority ethnic students**
  - **looked after children and care leavers**
  - **mature students**

- **young carers**

7.9 We try to also offer, where appropriate, activity aimed at apprentices and work based learners and students with non-traditional, qualifications.

7.10 The targeting of school/college outreach schemes under this Access Agreement will be based firstly on the WP profile of the particular school or college. In previous years, the outreach provision outlined in the Access Agreement has been delivered via the University's Schools and Colleges Partnership Programme (Keelelink). More than 200 schools (primary and secondary) and FE colleges were members, giving them access to a wide range of outreach activities. In 2013, the University made a decision to move towards a more targeted way of working with partner schools and colleges.

7.11 A ranking exercise was undertaken to prioritise schools and colleges which have high 'WP' scores, calculated by looking at data relating to socio-economic backgrounds, POLAR 3 (low participation areas), partner performance (National Qualifications Framework Level 2 and 3 results), and information on targeted postcode areas defined as 'deprived' (IMD). The Recruitment, Outreach and Access team currently works with a targeted list of 41 Sixth Form Centres and Further Education Colleges, 34 Secondary Schools and 16 Primary Schools.

7.12 Data continues to be collected on participants for all outreach activity. This is used to monitor whether the aim of not less than 70% of participants being from a WP background is met and will be used to evaluate the appropriateness of our targeting. The new targeted way of working has proven highly effective since its launch and during the 2013/14 academic year has improved the percentage of WP learners accessing our outreach schemes. For campus-based events in 2012/13, the percentage of learners who, through postcode analysis, counted as WP cohort was 45%. For 2013/14, to date, this percentage has increased to 58.3%. While this figure still falls below our target of 70% this figure has been lowered due to a few identifiable factors (for example, one school bringing learners from a partner school who are not a target institution).

### **7b) Outreach into Schools**

7.13 Current undergraduate students are trained to deliver the Keele Ambassadors in Schools Scheme (KLASS). Ambassadors deliver these sessions in the classroom environment. Under this programme, schools can select, free of charge, the sessions that they feel are most in line with the needs of their students. They make their selection from a menu of age-specific sessions (provided for Key Stages 2 to 5) covering topics across finance, careers, courses at HE, post-16 options and general introduction to HE.

7.14 During 2013/14 all KLASS materials have been revised. Full lesson plans and support materials are now available for these sessions through our website and so can be used by non-target schools. The KS2 sessions have been shared with our 'Explore University' HEI partners for use with partner schools across the scheme. As an activity with proven success, as well as providing current students with opportunities to gain experience and develop graduate attributes, this form of in-reach to schools will be retained. In 2014/15 onwards new avenues of delivery will be explored such as linking with Teacher Education.

7.15 Over the last year we have continued to provide University representatives, including staff, students and parent ambassadors at school and college events including Parents, Careers and Options Evening, an activity that has seen us attend more than 48 events in 2013/14. Given the

high demand for these activities, and our increased focus on working with advisers and the provision of personalised Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) in schools, we are developing resources for use at these events. We are also reviewing who attends events at 'high priority' partner schools and colleges and will endeavour to provide a member of staff rather than student ambassadors to attend these events.

7.16 Furthermore, in 2013/14 we have launched a new Governors' Network, to support Keele employees who represent the University on school governing bodies. Keele currently has a network of around 30 school governors, and has plans to further develop this area of work in the coming years. We are keen to match Keele staff skills with those required by particular school governing bodies and also to use curriculum links to support schools in which there are challenges with a particular area of study.

### **7c) Outreach Partnership Working**

7.17 In 2013/14 we have reaffirmed our commitment to working collaboratively with partners both internally and externally including Keele SU, the Keele Science Learning Centre and the University's Teacher Training team, as well as our geographical partners including Staffordshire University, our local FE colleges and partner schools.

7.18 In 2013/14 we have expanded our work with the primary age group, through the launch of 'Explore University' (formerly called the 'Primary to Higher Education' or 'P2HE' scheme) in collaboration with Staffordshire University, the University of Wolverhampton and Harper Adams University. The project is targeted at eight primary schools within the region that have high percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals. The offer includes events for Year 5 and 6 learners to raise aspirations and develop an awareness of university at this young age. The intention in 2014/15 and onwards is to continue to develop this project and track the learners throughout their educational journey through offering projects at relevant stages.

7.19 In addition Keele is working with other HEIs to deliver events for young people from the Cheshire, Warrington, Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Stoke areas. The HEIs in this partnership (Keele University, Staffordshire University, University of Chester, University of Derby, Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), Reaseheath College and Somerville College, Oxford) work collaboratively to offer jointly organised and delivered campus visits to target schools across the region as well as targeted events for young people in Care. Events are jointly evaluated and are an integral part of the individual university's outreach programme for schools in the region. In addition to the learner-focused events, this group is valuable for sharing good practice.

### **7d) Mentoring**

7.20 In 2015/16 we will continue to build on a culture of mentoring developed over a number of years and provide opportunities for learners and University students to engage in mentoring relationships. We currently have 150 active relationships and are on target to meet the target of 200 set for the 2013/14 academic year.

7.21 Through our ongoing subscription to an online eMentoring platform, students are offered the opportunity to engage with a Keele Mentor at several stages within their student journey with Keele. This commences with the outreach programme with study skills eMentoring offered from Key Stage 3. Furthermore the impact of participation in an outreach activity, such as a summer residential, is extended through the sign up to eMentoring post-event.

7.22 Those who attend the Uniskills summer school are offered the opportunity of a Keele mentor to provide support during the transition to Higher Education (Keele D.E.S.I.R.E.). We plan to further expand this scheme in 2015/16 to benefit a greater number of learners. This project will link seamlessly with the University's centrally managed Peer Mentoring programme, Keele Mentors, to allow students to keep the same mentor to aid their transition.

7.23 Currently accessible to all incoming Undergraduate and Postgraduate Research Students, the Keele Mentors programme will expand to offer peer support to Postgraduate Taught students for the 2015/16 academic year. Feedback has been sought via a range of methods and has focussed upon the impact of mentoring for both those requesting a mentor and current students acting as Mentors. Feedback from mentees indicates that the security of having a mentor was a significant factor in them settling in effectively to life at Keele. The experience for mentors was perhaps more striking with many mentors expressing that the role has had a profound impact upon them with regard to increasing their confidence as well as engagement within wider university life.

### **7e) Campus Events**

7.24 Feedback and qualitative impact evaluation has indicated that campus experiences are the most highly valued service for schools and colleges. We will, therefore, continue to offer opportunities for learners to engage in campus-based experiences. These fall into four broad categories:

- **cross-curriculum support**
- **generic aspiration raising**
- **subject-specific academic taster sessions**
- **residential events and summer schools (see section 7f)**

7.25 It is intended that a core package of free campus based experiences, such as Learner Conferences and Academic Taster Sessions, will continue to be offered to target schools and colleges and be developed annually based on partner needs.

7.26 Advice from our Education team has been sought in the development of our Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3/4 events to ensure that the planned offer for schools supports the National Curriculum.

7.27 Keele recognises the national need for aspiration and attainment-raising in specific areas, such as Medicine. The University established a 'Medpath' scheme in 2012/13, which has seen medical students working closely with the Skills Academy at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire to deliver Widening Participation activities to local school children interested in Medicine as a career. This project continues to develop and there is discussion of similar schemes across the Health faculty.

7.28 Existing access activity will continue to focus on aspiration raising and attainment, such as internal and external events including careers advisor talks, summer schools, mentoring, providing insight into healthcare careers and providing work experience. The Faculty Outreach team work closely with a range of external organisations including local NHS providers, schools and colleges, and other key education and health partners. The Faculty Outreach team hosts Careers Adviser seminars, and a range of taster days and Summer Schools which give IAG to pupils, teachers and careers advisers on the Faculty's main undergraduate programmes in

Medicine, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Nursing, and Midwifery. Additionally, each year the University holds a Medical Careers Information Day entitled “So you want to be a doctor”, whereby school children can gain an insight into studying Medicine. The Medical Careers Day attracts over 250 school pupils, aged between 14 and 17, from over 40 schools all over the UK. Over the coming academic year the Health Faculty will also be developing an online section of Faculty Outreach, which will be both promotional, and informative, with interactive materials for potential pupils and resources for staff.

7.29 The University continues to develop its programme of outreach in STEM subjects, and has a strong track record of activity delivered in this area. In 2011, we were nominated for a prestigious T.H.E. Award for our innovative Science and Engineering Mentoring project and plan to further build on our work in this area in 2015/16, with on-campus engagement activity based around the Keele Earth and Space Observatory, the Sustainability Hub and the Keele Science Learning Centre. Furthermore a Keele PhD student has recently been shortlisted for a national NEON Student of the Year Award for outstanding contribution to Widening Participation activity.

### **7f) Residential Experiences and Summer Schools**

7.30 It is noted that the Summer School programme previously delivered by Aimhigher was highly effective and a successful evidence-informed and supported intervention. In addition, research published by the Sutton Trust in 2012 found that summer school attendees were more likely to engage with the university application process overall: 93% ended up applying to – and 84% registering at – university, compared to 88% and 68% respectively of unsuccessful applicants to the programme.

7.31 The University’s ‘Unifest’ 2-night residential experience, introduced in 2012, continues to be a popular and high-impact engagement activity. In 2013 it attracted 94 Year 10/11/12 students (70% WP) from 23 schools across the North West of England, the Midlands and Wales. This intensive programme has a very positive effect on aspiration. After the event 65% stated that the event had broken down all fears that they had about university, with 88% stating that Unifest had encouraged them to apply to come to university. For Unifest 2014 applications are high and we have offered places to a 100% WP cohort. We are also working alongside colleagues in Psychology at Keele to more rigorously evaluate the project.

7.32 The University has expanded its programme of residential activities in 2014, replacing what was its Compact Scheme ‘Access to Keele’ (‘A2K’), with a summer residential called ‘Uniskills’ aimed at Key Stage 5 WP learners, supporting them in developing realistic expectations about the move from school/college to university, and also to train them in the skills necessary to make a smooth transition into Higher Education. We will continue to build on the success of this high impact activity, using external links to share good practice and collaborate with partner organisations as appropriate.

7.33 Staff and students from our School of Psychology are developing the evaluation tools used for our residential activity. We have put pre- and post-attitudinal surveys in place for 2014 but are further expanding the evaluation methods used to include an analysis of the Facebook group, Facebook polls and an interactive video booth. Data captured through these studies, along with a comprehensive literature review planned for 2014/15, will support us in the development of our residential programme for 2015/16. Learner details are captured for these activities and will be built into tracking.

### **7g) Access to the Professions**

7.34 In 2013/14 we revised the 'Access to the Professions' project in the subjects of Law and Medicine and launched a new scheme called 'Progression to...' focusing on these subjects. The project was aimed at Key Stage 5 learners from backgrounds currently under-represented in these fields of work and who are considered 'gifted and talented'. The programme includes elements of mentoring, work shadowing and support with university applications. However over recent years we have noticed a trend of low demand, particularly for Law, with high drop-out rates. We will, therefore, be seeking to withdraw this project from our outreach programme and will look to replace it with other subject-specific activities in collaboration with academic schools. It has been recognised that the eMentoring element of this project is highly valuable and will continue, along with working with younger age groups.

### **7h) Community Engagement**

7.35 The Community Legal Outreach Collaboration Keele (CLOCK) was launched by the Law School in 2012 to enable Keele students to provide vital help and support to disadvantaged communities through legal research, policy work and community legal education, while strengthening employability skills. The scheme includes a project called 'Clock-In', a collaborative commitment to develop community legal education projects to share in schools, colleges, university and wider communities and a variety of social and legal issues.

7.36 Keele launched its first ever Community Day in 2012. The event in 2013, held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, attracted more than 1,500 visitors to its campus. The event will run again on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2014 with further events planned annually.

### **7i) Student Ambassador Scheme**

7.37 The Keele Student Ambassador scheme employs approximately 300 students, a third of which are from WP backgrounds themselves (IMD data), in a variety of paid and voluntary roles. Many of the University's Widening Participation activities, as outlined in this Agreement, involve using current Foundation Year, undergraduate or postgraduate student ambassadors as positive role models to raise the educational and career aspirations of learners from primary through to post-16. By recruiting across all faculties, courses, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds, we ensure the Ambassadors reflect the diverse population of the University, as well as the pupils we work with in schools and colleges. An intense training programme for Ambassadors exists, which is re-visited on an annual basis, with additional continuous professional development and specialist role training opportunities available to them all throughout the year. The scheme also allows the (DBS checked) Ambassadors to get involved in a range of challenging and rewarding projects, all of which help them develop transferable skills, gain valuable extra-curricular experience and enhance their CV; supporting their future careers. Opportunities include open days, school talks and workshops, Higher Education fairs, one-to-one support, careers fairs, residential events, subject specific academic taster sessions, administrative support, student panels, on campus events, study skills sessions, project work and research.

### **7j) Summary of Additional Planned Outreach Developments in 2015/16**

- Further development of collaborative working and outreach programmes, including the primary scheme in partnership with other regional HEIs
- Further development of faculty outreach and Widening Participation strategies to support projects working with teachers and advisers

(Cont.)

- Continued investment and development of enhanced evaluation plans and tracking, with additional resources allocated to monitor effectiveness and impact of outreach activity across the whole student lifecycle
- Closer working between Outreach and Student Support teams to join up mentoring schemes to assist transition
- Following a review of pilot NSP-funded Finance projects, we plan to increase investment in resources aimed at raising awareness of student finance and providing accurate and timely Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to target groups of under-represented students

## **8) Information for Prospective Students and Advisers**

- 8.1 We believe that providing high quality, timely and impartial Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) is of utmost importance and therefore in the spirit of the collaborations outlined above will continue working with Staffordshire University, in particular, to ensure that this is delivered coherently for local learners.
- 8.2 We recognise it is not only the learners who need support with Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) but influencers such as parents, carers and school practitioners too.
- 8.3 Keele University has a Parent Ambassadors scheme which recruits parents and carers who currently have children enrolled on HE courses or recent graduates, but have limited personal experience of HE themselves. As a highly successful and nationally recognised project this work will be maintained. These Ambassadors will attend events, primarily in schools and colleges, where they will interact with other parents and carers who have concerns about their children progressing to Higher Education. They will also continue to be engaged in campus-based activity (for example, open and visit days or arrivals days) and community-based activity.
- 8.4 Certain activities have been created that involve teachers and offer them Continuing Professional Development, which supports them in providing quality IAG to learners. These include training events and conferences, the development of resources and a teacher/lecturer mentoring scheme. In 2015/16 we will build upon the work undertaken to date to enhance the subject networks and relationships between school and college staff and University specialists.

## **9) Retention, Success and Progression**

- 9.1 Keele University is proud of its record with regard to retention, success, student satisfaction and employability and routinely performs above its benchmarks. In 2013 the University was ranked joint 2<sup>nd</sup> in the UK for overall student satisfaction. The University, recognises, however that students can find the experience of Higher Education to be both daunting and challenging. As such, we are committed to ensuring that Keele students receive transparent and detailed information about support services and pertinent student issues in advance of, through transition and throughout their student lifecycle. Whilst new developments are included below,

it is important to note the extensive range of existing support for success, retention and employability (Student Support Services, Advice and Support at Keele (ASK), Wellbeing Services, Library, Careers and Employability etc.), as well as local support provided by academic schools.

- 9.2 In recent years, the University has made significant strides in developing its services in order that students are better able to respond to the challenges they encounter whilst at University. Work relating to retention, success, student support and employability, forms part of the University's Student Support Strategy, introduced during the 2012/13 academic year. This work, led by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and Student Experience and Head of Student Support and Development Services, demonstrates the University's intention to ensure that all support initiatives and services, impact positively upon the experience of all Keele students.
- 9.3 Keele provides a full range of pre- registration IAG and support through its outreach and Open/Visit Day programmes. Following this, a comprehensive transitions support programme includes pre-arrival study and social support for mature, local and disabled students. Upon arrival, students experience the Keele Welcome which incorporate a comprehensive social, academic and support programme all aimed at ensuring that as smooth a transition for incoming Keele students is achieved. Feedback from Keele Students as part of our 2015/16 Student Consultation has indicated that some students do feel anxious about coming to University with 'money', 'workload' and 'making friends' being of most significant concern. These themes have been picked up and addressed through the development of online IAG delivered through the SAM portal (see section 9.30-1 below). The University will endeavour to develop its transitions support to include a more relevant and transparent communications plan to ensure that students receive information related to the above and related issues in order that they are more informed before commencing their studies at Keele.
- 9.4 The University's Learning and Teaching Committee, ensures that the curriculum, assessment and learning and teaching styles are inclusive and take into consideration the diversity of our Keele student community. The University's Personal Tutoring system is designed to provide students with thorough academic support and guidance as well as more focused attention to specific student support needs. Work is undertaken across the University academic community to analyse data relating to the Student experience of underrepresented student groups through Curriculum Annual Review & Development (CARD) in order to consider how to improve student retention and success. The Distinctive Keele Curriculum ensures that students have the opportunity to engage in an embedded development programme, which aims to prepare students for graduate life but also to enable them to better prepare for and navigate the many transitions they encounter throughout their student experience.
- 9.5 This work is complimented by support delivered through dedicated professional student services which include financial support, disability and dyslexia support, careers guidance, counselling and emotional wellbeing services and other information, support and guidance services.
- 9.6 The University continues to build on these high quality support services and in 2015/16 we will use Access Agreement funding to further develop and extend our provision to those students who are in need, but might not necessarily access support services when they experience difficulties that could ultimately lead to withdrawal or them not achieving their potential. Evidence from a wide range of staff who work with students at the University suggests that those from non-traditional backgrounds and young male students are least likely to seek help from the various support services or professionals. We will aim to provide such students with more and alternative opportunities to engage and present. Understanding the reasons for non-engagement by vulnerable students is essential if we are to make significant improvements to

the experience of such students.

9.7 As such the University will be recruiting for the 2014/15 academic year specific posts to focus upon the experiences of both Vulnerable Students (those not engaging with services) and Under-represented Students (including Care Leavers, Asylum Seekers, Black Minority ethnic Students, and Transgender etc.). The purpose of these roles will be to act as a first point of contact to these student groups, but to also carry out research into the experiences of particular students groups, in order that effective support frameworks are developed for relevant services, and that more relevant and effective support is delivered. The posts will work across Outreach and Student Services Departments, and will connect with key stakeholders within and beyond the University in order to ensure that all areas that impact upon the student experience are consulted, that the interaction with students is better understood and that the student experience is accounted for within this work. It is intended that this work will better enable the University to understand the decisions and experiences had by particular students throughout their educational experience, from early years education through to post graduation.

### **9a) Supporting Care Leavers, Estranged Students and Asylum Seekers**

9.8 The University has worked hard to enhance the experience of Care Leavers and Estranged Students throughout the Student Lifecycle. Following on from the award of the Frank Buttle Quality Mark in 2013, work has continued to ensure that we see an increase in students applying, being admitted, progressing through their Keele experience and finding Graduate Level employment. Whilst for the 2013/14 academic year there has been a slight decrease in Care Leavers applying to Keele - down 5 from 105 to 100, the number enrolled has risen from 6 to 10. Whilst these appear to be small numbers they reflect the low levels of care leavers applying to University, whilst reflecting the work being undertaken in the University to ensure that barriers are removed and that the aspiration to attend University can become a reality.

9.9 We are seeing an increased number of Looked after Children attending outreach events, increased contact with applicants, increases in offers made to care leaver applicants (17 from 8) and increased contact with students upon arrival at Keele. Care leavers are now offered opportunities to engage throughout the recruitment cycle with many engaging in funded bespoke visit days, with and taking advantage of application/interview advice from the University's Care Leaver contact.

9.10 The University is working in close partnership with the charity Article 26, which aims to help Asylum Seekers to access higher education. This is an area we are deeply committed to and as such are incorporating work relating to the above groups into a specific post at the University to ensure that students receive the right support and opportunities and that we be able to continually improve our services to such students. Students from these groups are able to access specialist support on debt, finance, help with health costs, housing, and welfare benefits from Advice and Support at Keele (ASK). For the 2014/15 academic year the tuition fees for one Asylum Seeker will be waived for their three years of Undergraduate study.

### **9b) Supporting Mature Students**

9.11 Mature students are a relatively small but important part of the student body. Following on from the success of the University's pre-arrival events for Mature Students, a comprehensive range of support will be introduced in the 2014/15 academic year with the aim of being further developed into 2015/16. A specific role created in the University to act as a main contact point for Mature Students, has enabled us to better understand the experiences our Mature Students

face as well as recognise the gaps in experience. Work has commenced with key stakeholders, in particular between the Students' Union as well as Support and Outreach teams to consider the delivery of more joined up working from pre-application through to post graduation. Greater care from an earlier point is intended to ensure that the specific nature of the Mature Students experience be made more transparent from an earlier point and that the continuation of support and activities throughout and in preparation for employment will improve retention and raise the satisfaction levels of this group of students. Mature Students leaving work and entering HE are able to be supported with specialist advice on debt, finance, housing welfare benefits, and more from Advice and Support at Keele (ASK).

### **9c) Supporting Student Parents**

9.12 Embedded within increased support for Mature Students is a commitment to increasing those support services for student parents. This year KeeleSU established a support group for student parents to meet and offer peer-to-peer support on top of services offered within Student Support. Keele is fortunate to have an on-site state-of-the-art Day Nursery facility to provide child care for those with young families. During the 2013/14 academic year work has been done to increase the opening hours of the Nursery to cater for students with late exams and work is currently being undertaken to enable student parents and carers to sit exams at an earlier time so as not to impact on their caring responsibilities. During the 2014/15 academic year, research will be carried out around student engagement with the Nursery to try and increase student numbers and as part of the 2015/16 Access Agreement we will be putting in place funding to subsidise day care and crèche provision. Student parents are able to access specialist support with childcare costs, welfare benefits, debt, finance, housing welfare benefits from Advice and Support at Keele (ASK).

### **9d) Induction and Support through Transitions**

9.13 The transition from school, college or when returning to education can be particularly demanding for many students. Keele is committed to ensuring that students are supported through this process as well as through the many other transitions they encounter throughout their student experience. Extensive work has been undertaken across the University to ensure that communication provided throughout application, arrival and through our student's time at Keele is relevant, coordinated and complimentary.

9.14 The University's Induction Management Group has developed a Student Induction Strategy which makes explicit the aims of induction and aims to ensure that a seamless, relevant and joined up welcome experience for students is achieved. The strategy considers the impact of transition on all students, but ensures that there is particular focus upon the experience encountered by under-represented students.

9.15 An example is a social support programme for students with Asperger's Syndrome, which was delivered in partnership through the 2012/13 academic year between the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support team and the Staffordshire LEA Disability Support service. The programme builds upon an initial weekend residential event for students and their families, providing year-round support and development opportunities for the students and was developed in order to address concerns that students with Asperger's Syndrome were more likely to withdraw or take a period of leave from the University. The reasons stated related to the challenge presented not in the classroom but with regard the social experience at University.

9.16 A comprehensive programme which includes local trips, social events on campus and

workshops i.e. employability and wellbeing has led to those involved developing positive long term relationships and has ensured that these students stay connected with relevant support services in the University.

9.17 The students engaged have provided feedback via surveys and regular discussion groups, which has indicated a clear correlation between their engagement on the programme along with friendships developed, and their continuation and success within their degree programmes. As a consequence, further resource will be allocated to this project for the 2014/15 academic year to ensure that it continues to have a positive impact upon the experience of students with Asperger's Syndrome at Keele.

9.18 Students have indicated in both the University's Welcome Survey as well as the Access Agreement 2015/16 Student Consultation that they feel that it is necessary for work to be developed within University Residences as well as within the off-campus environment to ensure that opportunities better exist for students to develop communities and form lasting friendship groups. The University operates an established Residence Support Service which aims to provide peer support for students within their accommodation. It is envisioned that added to this, the University will introduce a Community-based service, which will ensure that students will be able to engage socially with their peers in events, activities, volunteering and sport. Students will play a leading role in developing self-sustaining communities. In order to enhance and develop communities within University residences we are planning on enabling students who reside in those residences to take ownership of and engage socially with their peers in events, activities, volunteering and sport through the establishment of Halls councils. This will be developed in conjunction with KeeleSU to ensure that there is a seamless connection between social activities within halls and social activities happening centrally.

9.19 For 2014/15 an integrated programme of IAG will be delivered as part of a pre-arrival support week for all students but with specific sessions targeted for under-represented students. Feedback from students attending our pre-arrival events has suggested that whilst the specific focus of pre-arrival events for mature and local students is appreciated, that it would be of greater use for students to be able to 'pick and choose' from a suite of sessions and activities. As such, we will develop a programme which provides opportunities for students to meet and engage with those who have shared interests but also deliver a range of sessions focussed upon key issues impacting upon the student experiences, i.e. living with others, disability support, language of HE etc. Students with disabilities, receiving disability related welfare benefits, are able to get specialist benefits advice from Advice and Support at Keele (ASK).

## **9e) Student Support and Wellbeing**

9.20 The welfare and wellbeing of our students is priority at Keele. We are committed to ensuring that we work proactively to address wellbeing issues before they become problematic whilst at the same time ensuring an effective response to students who are struggling with aspects of their life and/or who might be experiencing crisis.

9.21 The University values the impact that proactive, group based initiatives can have on students experiencing mental health problems; an issue that is often accompanied with embarrassment and shame. A sports related self-development project called 'It's a Goal' was being piloted in the 2013/14 academic year. Due to the success of this project and impact upon the participants it has been embedded into the programme of support managed by the University's Counselling and Emotional Wellbeing Service. Delivered in partnership between North Staffordshire Combined Health Care, Stoke City Football Club and Keele, this is an example of an initiative

which has a specific remit of engaging hard to reach groups, in this instance young men, a group who it is shown are at greater risk of attempting suicide and who are less likely than females to engage in traditional forms of support and therapy.

- 9.22 Keele takes the wellbeing of its students very seriously, reflected by significant changes introduced at the University to ensure that students are aware of and feel able to access support, and that the supporters of our students, i.e. Personal tutors, Parents etc., feel able to provide effective advice, support and referrals to professional wellbeing services.
- 9.23 This commitment is reflected in an increase in staffing provision within the University's Counselling and Emotional Wellbeing Service – an increase in Counselling staffing as well as Mental health Support and Health Promotion expertise will enable the University to both respond to students requiring support with a mental health problem but also work proactively to raise awareness of mental health problems, reduce the stigma so often associated with mental health and work with staff and students to improve aspects of University life that can lead to an increase in Mental health issues, such as examinations and key transition points i.e. holidays, graduation etc.
- 9.24 The University has invested in the training of eight members of staff to become Mental Health First Aid Instructors. Staff and students across the University will be trained to be able to provide support and help to others experiencing the early warning signs of a mental health problem. Training will begin in June 2014, implementation being during the academic year 2014/15 and beyond. Staff involved span the University Professional Services, Academic Community and the Students' Union. This collaborative approach to mental health support and campaigning follows on from the University and the Students' Unions signing of the Time to Change pledge in October 2013.
- 9.25 In order to ensure that work relating to Mental health, Student Crisis and the provision of effective support for vulnerable students, the University is to recruit a Vulnerable Students' Officer, who will be tasked with both supporting vulnerable students who are not engaging with services but also to carry out research with the intention of developing a model of best practice, in order that such students do receive the most appropriate support possible.

#### **9f) Peer Support**

- 9.26 As well as support services delivered by the University, we recognise that peer support is invaluable and that the vast majority of students' time will be spent either formally or more usually informally with other students. Being a campus-based University we recognise that society and sporting activities form a valuable contribution to the student experience and student success. With over 130 societies KeeleSU has recently launched an award where societies can gain stripes for outstanding work in a particular area. There are currently five stripes based around community, inclusion, sustainability, development and partnership. The Inclusion stripe is gained by societies who have "Taken positive steps to increase membership and include as many members as possible."
- 9.27 Keele SU has made specific efforts to include students that don't traditionally engage, without ignoring or neglecting their current membership or other student groups. These students include, but are not limited to, disabled, international, post graduate, parent or carer, mature, satellite, non-campus. The Community stripe is gained by "Taken active steps to make a positive impact in the community. This can be through involvement with activities and events at Keele University, but they will also have made an impact on the wider community by engaging

with activities, campaigns and events at a local, national or international level. They may have engaged with community groups and have helped to promote Keele students as valued members of the community.”

9.28 In the 2014/15 academic year KeeleSU will be looking to develop a similar initiative to be rolled out to sports clubs which will both recognise the existing work they do around student retention and success and further encourage more work within this area.

9.29 Keele is the only university to have a designated Volunteer Centre Branch within its Students' Union. Over the past year (1 Oct 2013 – 15 April 2014) 5,313 hours have been undertaken by students. Last year a volunteer service known as Street Team was developed and subsequently piloted by a student. Street Team is now fully up and running as a student led service that walks students home to their rooms late at night either from the Students' Union, library or central academic building. There are a number of student led support services at Keele and we are committed to working with those services to ensure they are able to deliver the best service possible to students.

#### **9g) Support through Technology**

9.30 The University is engaged in an innovative and exciting project, which aims to provide relevant and effective information, advice and guidance throughout the student journey. SAM (or, Student Advisory Model) will deliver an effective online support service, by providing students with responses to questions asked with regard pertinent student issues such as Money Management and Student finance, Student Accommodation, IT, Student Transition and Welfare Support via a virtual student adviser in the form of a virtual avatar. The avatar SAM also directs students to relevant on-line support materials and other resources.

9.31 Students engaged in the development of the project have indicated the value that SAM will provide to students 24/7, particularly those who are not engaged with support services, or who feel unable to disclose particular issues or concerns, either in advance of arriving at University or when studying here at Keele. SAM was made available to all UK HE students in December 2013 and a version with bespoke Keele responses and resources is under development for roll-out in 2014/15 academic year. The Avatar will act as another member of Keele's support staff and being able to provide students with general support but also being able to support and assist students with various specific requests relating to the student experience, i.e. assisting with key processes such as taking a period of leave, and referring and booking appointments for students at relevant services. All of which can be achieved anywhere with the service being accessible on all mobile devices.

#### **9h) Employability**

9.32 We will continue to invest in student employability and build on existing good practice within the University and the sector to deliver an ambitious career development, employer engagement and enterprise support programme to ensure that timely, relevant and accessible provision is available across our student and graduate community.

9.33 Whilst we consistently perform well in measures of graduate employability, we are committed to offering unemployed and underemployed graduates a comprehensive package of support to ensure they have the skills and knowledge that employers seek in their graduate recruits. The Careers and Employability Team, working in partnership with the Employer Engagement Team, will build upon the success of its established programme of employability

support and offer a range of new initiatives for graduates during 2014/15 which will include an intensive three day training and development opportunity for this target group. These activities will include careers guidance, psychometric testing, and skills development and, where appropriate support to access graduate internships.

- 9.34 We work to help all students, including those from under- represented groups, develop their career potential and to achieve successful career outcomes and a Careers Adviser will be recruited with a specific remit to lead on supporting under-represented students. This role will help to develop further work within Careers and Employability to extend support to discreet groups of students with additional needs. Work has been planned to develop further work for students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and Asperger's students by delivering targeted employability support. This will involve developing specific expertise and the delivery of group sessions, and one to one guidance enabling this group of students to successfully enter a challenging graduate job market.
- 9.35 Student work opportunities provide a valuable opportunity for students to develop employability skills and earn money towards their living costs. The University already provides many such opportunities for students (Student Ambassadors; Students' Union Job Shop, Roles in the Students' Union etc.). This is an important part of the skills development opportunities offered to all of our students (from which we anticipate that WP students will benefit on a proportionate basis).
- 9.36 Keele will continue to support the range of opportunities accredited by the HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Report) outside of students' academic studies that enhance employability. The Activities department in KeeleSU supports students to enhance their HEAR. The number of students volunteering and engaging in these activities continues to grow, however we are keen to further develop targeted approaches to ensure that we are actively engaging with WP students.
- 9.37 A particular area of focus is around the Students' Unions democratic structures and ensuring that they are accessible to WP students. ASK's membership of Advice UK is contingent on it having an Equal Opportunities policy. The Students' Union is currently undergoing a review of its structures with the hope of increasing participation and engagement, particularly amongst hard to reach students. The University are keen to work alongside the Students' Union to ensure that WP students are supported and well equipped to stand in, and participate in Students' Union elections and democracy.
- 9.38 The Activities department in KeeleSU ran the first ever Society and Sports training conference in September 2013. Approximately 150 students from society committees and sports executive committees attended to receive relevant training over a period of two days. Accommodation costs were met for those attending who needed it. This conference will run again in September 2014.

### **9i) Summary of Additional Planned Retention, Success and Progression Activity in 2015/16**

- As part of a broader work experience scheme contributing to the overall 'student offer', further develop and promote an expanded range of work experience, internship, mentoring, volunteering and employment options
- Promote the Student Ambassador, Volunteering, Keele Mentors schemes to WP students as a means for them to develop employability skills and also contribute pro-actively to the fair access agenda
- Develop our University-wide opportunities for skills development and articulation as part of the overall 'student offer', including Away Days delivered as part of the Distinctive Keele Curriculum. This will benefit WP students on a proportionate basis
- Co-ordinate, develop and better promote Student and Academic Support services available to support students' academic skills post-entry (e.g. In-Addition Math's Support and the Write Direction, Student Skills service)
- Develop a comprehensive, transparent communications strategy to ensure that incoming Keele students be provided with information about a range of pertinent student issues, i.e. money, debt, homesickness
- Provide targeted one-to-one support for students at risk of dropping out at various transition points (e.g. those with Asperger's, autism, mental health problems, disabilities; and those who are care-leavers, Mature Students or student parents); one-to-one follow-up, support and online information to supplement initial induction; mentoring for disabled students; preventative measures such as advice on financial management; Disability workshops; stress management programmes; and targeted support for 'at risk' WP students identified through attendance monitoring
- Provide individual face-to-face financial advice and support to WP students
- Expand resources for provision of mental health advice, targeted particularly at those from under-represented groups
- Further develop and support student led initiatives such as Society Stripes
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to increase engagement of WP students in the co-curriculum (HEAR, societies, sport, volunteering, SU democracy)

## 10) Fair Access and Contextual Information

- 10.1 Keele University develops proactively its processes to support applications from and admission of the 'most able, least likely' students, ensuring that all students who have the potential to succeed in Higher Education have an equal and fair opportunity to do so.
- 10.2 Keele University has trialled the use of contextual data in a small number of traditionally highly selective recruiting programmes since 2012..Recently, a standardised report has been developed across all applications which draws through contextual data to ensure that at an individual applicant level data is presented in a routine manner and flags students on agreed University criteria as to how they can potentially be supported further in the application process. Data on this report includes: performance of the applicants school at GCSE and A level or equivalent, postcode data on low participation neighbourhoods and data that identifies whether the applicant has been looked after/in care (as indicated on the UCAS form). This process is delivered in a clear, transparent and fair way to meet the needs and requirements of students coming from disadvantaged WP backgrounds. Keele does not practice differential offer-making as a result of contextual data being considered.
- 10.3 In order to expand and explore further the use of contextual data in 2014/15 across the University, a further series of pilot activities will be co-ordinated for other selective courses. These pilot activities will draw on the work being carried out nationally by SPA (Supporting Professional Admissions), other institutional good practice and datasets provided by UCAS.
- 10.4 Keele University has offered a Foundation Year (FY) since its establishment in 1949, enabling students to study for their degree over four years. The current FY programmes focus on students who have taken inappropriate pre-university subjects for the degree they wish to study, or who enter Keele with non-traditional qualifications, or are from WP backgrounds.
- 10.5 Keele has in the past developed a number of Progression Agreements with local FE colleges. These have started to be reviewed and updated in 2013/14.In 2014/15 we will continue work in this area to ensure clarity around progression routes from non-A level qualifications.

## 11) Collaboration

- 11.1 In recent years, the University has established strategic partnerships to increase student access to its provision in the region. It has well-developed collaborative arrangements with a number of regional HEIs and FE colleges and sees partnership and collaboration as central to its mission. We will also seek opportunities to explore 'out of region' partnerships with both universities and post-16 providers that have a strategic fit with Keele's curriculum offer.
- 11.2 Our various partnerships have been designed to expand the range of provision across the region, and have led to the dissemination of good practice, shared project delivery and the encouragement of complementary provision.
- 11.3 As described in the above 'Outreach and Access' section **(7)**, Keele University is working with other HEIs regionally to deliver outreach events for young people from the Cheshire, Warrington, Staffordshire, Stoke and Shropshire areas The HEIs in this partnership (Keele University, Staffordshire University, University of Chester, University of Derby, MMU, Reaseheath College, Glyndwr University and Somerville College, Oxford) work collaboratively to offer jointly organised and delivered campus visits to target schools in the region as well as targeted events for looked after children. Events are jointly evaluated and are an integral part of

the individual universities outreach programme for schools in the region.

11.4 The University is also a partner in a collaborative outreach scheme with other regional HEIs, namely Staffordshire University, the University of Wolverhampton and Harper Adams University, designed to target primary learners and work with schools who have a high percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals, to provide targeted outreach activities for Year 5 and 6 learners.

11.5 Keele University and Staffordshire University have for some time collaborated as partners in a wide range of outreach initiatives and the two institutions will continue to work together to ensure the legacy from the Aimhigher programme is maintained and developed.

11.6 The University is also an active member of organisations including HELOA, FACE and NEON; managers and practitioners from the Outreach and Student Support teams regularly attend conferences, training and workshop sessions to further knowledge and share good practice.

## 12) Monitoring and Evaluation

5.7 Consistent with our core strategic aims, we are committed to ensuring thorough and systematic analysis of all our activities to ensure they meet the expectations and needs of our stakeholder groups. All of our outreach activities will be both qualitatively and quantitatively evaluated against the expected outcomes. We will use this evidence based research to influence our future outreach activities and programmes.

5.8 In 2010/11, as part of developments around our Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA), Keele developed a full evaluation strategy. This proven and robust methodology will be adopted to evaluate and monitor progress against this Access Agreement based on the following core principles:

- **that monitoring and evaluation must be embedded in all activities from the outset**
- **recognition of the role of monitoring and evaluation in shaping future strategy and progress as demonstrated by the process cycle**
- **producing annual monitoring reports - that publish data showing the types, level and cost of interventions - is key to demonstrating progress against the strategic assessment and Access Agreement**
- **ensuring Keele's policy developments are clearly evidence based, with the majority of activity being informed by analysis of existing practice, exploration of national research and institutional based research**
- **the University recognises the importance of effective and rigorous monitoring and evaluating of the existing and proposed work that is documented in this Access Agreement.**

5.9 It is also recognised that, in preparation for the effective monitoring of this Access Agreement, further investment relating to data capture and analysis needs to be prioritised to ensure the effectiveness of our activities against their stated aims. This will also be important in the dissemination of evidenced based good practice across the sector.

5.10 In 2013/14 we have begun working with staff and students from the School of Psychology to develop for a programme-wide evaluation process for our Outreach work, which will be closely aligned to recently-published national guidance from HEFCE and OFFA.

5.11 It is also recognised that working collaboratively with other institutions and sector

practitioners enhances the evaluation process and we will continue to share publicly our findings of interventions that work. In particular however, a collaborative approach to evaluation will be sought explicitly for those projects being delivered in partnership.

5.12 An Outreach and Widening Participation Working Group was established in 2012/13 and has been heavily involved in the evaluation and development of this and subsequent Access Agreements.

5.13 Overall responsibility for the University Access Agreement rests with the University Executive Committee, with the development, delivery and monitoring of the Agreement's content being the executive responsibility of the Director of Marketing and Communications.

### **13) Equality and Diversity**

13.1 The University has undertaken a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on this Access Agreement in line with the Keele EIA procedure. The EIA has been used to identify any possible barriers to participation in the Access Agreement, and explored opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations. The EIA will be reviewed and monitored on an on-going basis as part of the monitoring and review arrangements of the Access Agreement.

13.2 The University acknowledges the legislative context supporting how we improve access, retention and student success among people from 'under-represented' groups and works proactively to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) and Public Sector Equality Duty. A set of equality objectives has been developed in consultation with staff and student groups, and published. The University has identified a strategic objective to enhance the diversity of its workforce and student profile through a range of equality and Widening Participation initiatives. Recent activities in 2012/13 have included events to highlight and promote International Women's Day, International Day for Disabled People and National Care Leavers' Week.

13.3 There is a commitment to further develop collaborative approaches and join up the design and evaluation of our Equality and Widening Participation strategies. The process for the development of these strategies is currently being explored by the relevant staff at the University to ensure they are more closely aligned and specific targets/actions relating to improving access from under-represented groups (for example, females to science subjects) are jointly agreed. It is hoped that this particular piece of work will contribute towards strengthening the University's Athena SWAN Charter ambitions.

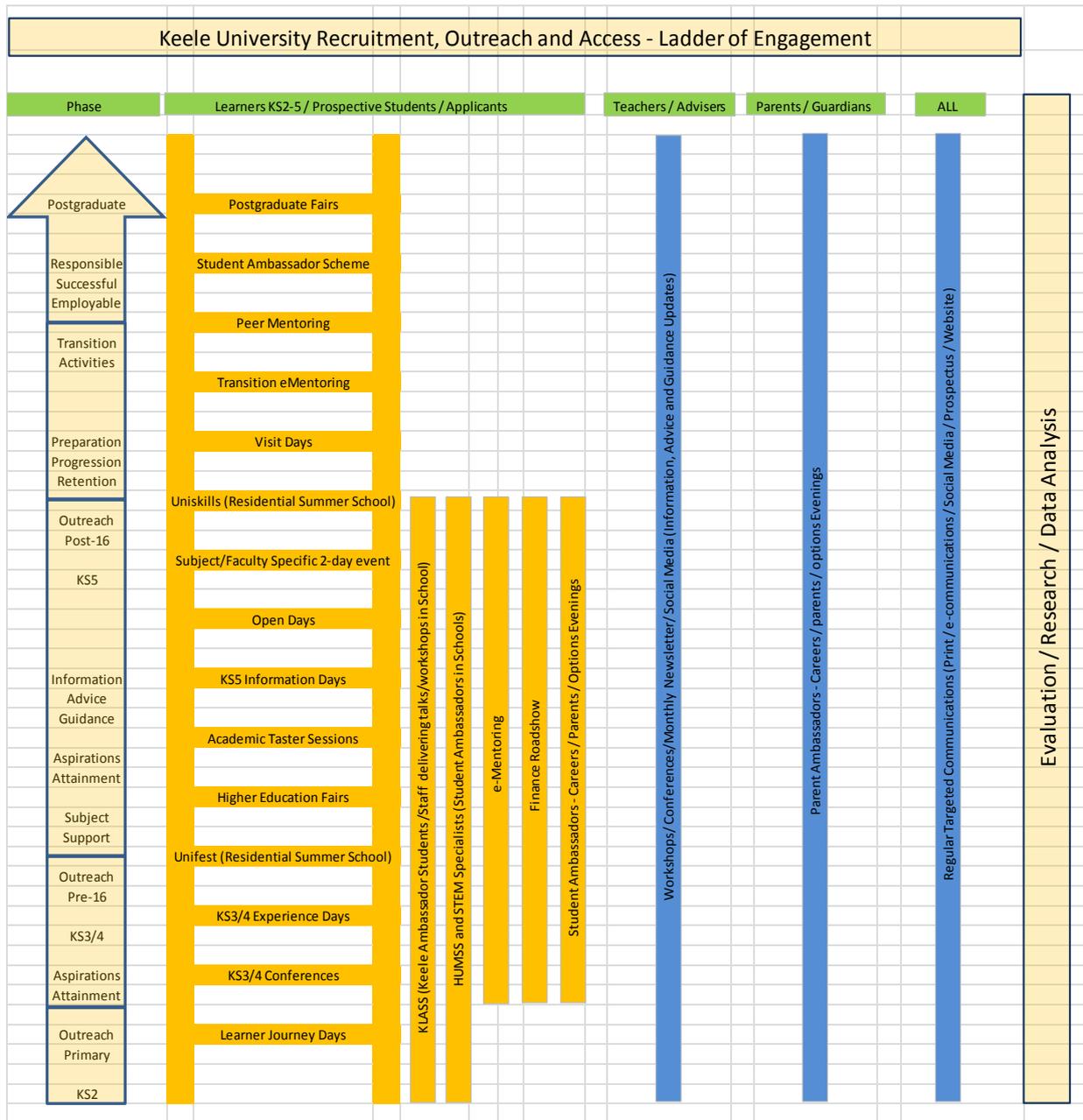
13.4 The University has in place robust procedures for assessing the impact of its policies on protected groups under the Act and has in place comprehensive arrangements for the management and completion of equality impact assessments (EIA), including the use of an online system and a package of training for relevant staff. The EIA process should help to identify both positive and negative outcomes and can help ascertain where outcomes can be prevented or justified within the permits of the law.

13.5 Equality and Diversity training is a compulsory element of the Student Ambassador training, there is a newly developed Ambassador role for the support of disabled students, and an Equality and Diversity statement is incorporated into Terms and Conditions of working with partner schools and colleges. Further planned developments include the introduction of Equality Impact Assessments for all outreach activity (<http://www.keele.ac.uk/eia/>).

13.6 Progress against all objectives is monitored annually by the University Equality and Diversity Sub Committee of Council, and published as part of the University's Annual Equality and Diversity Reports which can be found on the University's equality and diversity web pages. The Outreach Working Group has representation from Equality and Diversity staff, and the terms of reference have been amended to include an annual review of the 'Student Equality and Diversity Profile Report'.

Keele University  
May 2014

# Appendix A



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

**Institution name: Keele University**

**Institution UKPRN: 10007767**

**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	HESA T1a - State School (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	KPI indicator. This is based on UCAS previous institution data reported by institutions to HESA and is released in the April for the previous years datasets	No	2009/10	91.2%	91%	91%	91%			Over the last 6 years Keele has recruited above benchmark and the UK for students from state schools or colleges. Although Keele's percentage has fallen from last year, Keele's benchmark has also fallen and Keele is therefore still above benchmark.
2	HESA T1a - NS-SEC classes 4-7 (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	This is based on a question on the UCAS form regarding the occupation of the applicant's parent/guardian, reported by institutions to HESA. These datasets are released in the April for the previous academic year	No	2009/10	30.5%	31%	31%	31.5%			Following improvements in the two years previous to 2010/11, Keele remains slightly below benchmark and the UK overall for this measure and we aim to improve our performance through targeted activities.
3	HESA T1a - Low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR3) (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	This is based on a student's permanent home postcode reported by institutions to HESA. HESA map postcodes to a dataset of participation rates (POLAR3). The chances of young people entering higher education vary according to where they live.	No	2009/10	12.8%	13%	13.5%	13.5%			The criteria for the POLAR measure has been changed which has led to a deterioration in performance against an already challenging target. The fall in the current year follows 3 years of increase. This target has therefore been reconsidered in view of the current performance outputs.
4	HESA T2a - (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	No previous HE qualifications and from a Low Participation Neighbourhood First Degree entrants	No	2008/09	15%	18%	18.5%	19%			There has been an increase in the number of mature students from under-represented groups studying at Keele in the last few years. Since the introduction of POLAR3 the proportion of entrants was 19.8% against a benchmark of 14.8%. Recognising this we have increased our yearly milestones to reflect this growth.
5	Other statistic - Disabled (please give details in the next column)	Participation of students in higher education who are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance	No	2009/10	5.7%	6.4%	6.7%	7%			Keele continues to recruit students in receipt of Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) above benchmark and the UK.
6	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Young, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA look at students active at an institution in a particular year. They then examine data for the subsequent year, linking individual student records, and determine (a) whether the student is still active in higher education (b) whether the student is still active at the same institution.	No	2008/09	4.6%	4%	4%	4%			Keele has traditionally performed well with regard to general retention data. Keele's percentage is fairly static over the time period with small movements up and down. Therefore we would wish to continue to maintain this level of high performance.
7	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA look at students active at an institution in a particular year. They then examine data for the subsequent year, linking individual student records, and determine (a) whether the student is still active in higher education (b) whether the student is still active at the same institution. This data is then categorised using low participation neighbourhoods	No	2008/09	7.2%	6.5%	6.2%	6%			For young entrants from a Low Participation Neighbourhood Keele has performed well in 2010/11 and is below its benchmark. By focusing more targeted retention work through the investment laid out in the OFFA statement a positive impact on closing the gap between LPN and non LPN postcodes continues to be the ambition.

8	HESA T3a - No longer in HE after 1 year (Mature, full-time, first degree entrants)	HESA look at students active at an institution in a particular year. They then examine data for the subsequent year, linking individual student records, and determine (a) whether the student is still active in higher education (b) whether the student is still active at the same institution. This data is then categorised using mature student data also.	No	2008/09	11.9%	10.7%	10.4%	10%			For mature entrants, Keele is below the UK average and at or above its benchmark for the last 5 years. By focusing more targeted retention work through the investment laid out in the OFFA statement a positive impact on closing the gap between mature and other students is the ambition.
9	HESA T5 - Projected degree (full-time, first degree entrants)	The projected learning outcomes measure uses non-continuation data to predict the proportion of students who would qualify with an award.	No	2008/09	83.2%	84.5%	85%	85.5%			Due to the range of interventions both in the whole student experience, academic interventions, peer support and others the ambition is that much of the work carried out will impact positively on this KPI.
10	Other statistic - Applications (please give details in the next column)	Applications from LPN postcode areas is a measure to explore sufficient applications as a percentage of Keele's total applications to support other targets for intake for learners from low participation neighbourhoods	No	2010/11	14.5%	15.8%	16.5%	17%			In 2014/15 it will be key to maintain current levels of applications from this group in a new environment; subsequently from this year we will aspire to make progress towards increasing applications from these groups.
11	Other statistic - Applications (please give details in the next column)	Applications from disadvantaged postcode areas is a measure of applications data based on applicant's postcode and national deprivation (IMD) data.	No	2010/11	34%	35%	35.5%	36%			As a target measure for a large proportion of outreach work this target will support demonstration of impact of this work.

**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 (other - please give details in the next column)	Deliver support for those advising learners to ensure they are providing accurate and appropriate information, advice and guidance	No	2009/10	60	100	100	100			These targets relate to the numbers of teachers/advisers engaged with over the course of an academic year, both in school and on campus. The baseline year target related to the delivery of one annual conference for teachers/advisers, although in recent years it has been more difficult to attract similar numbers to this event. We plan to continue with this event beyond 2014 and are also undertaking other events with teachers and advisers, such as attending staff meetings and inset days to help us meet this target.
2	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Deliver (pre-entry outreach and transition) mentoring relationships	No	2009/10	79	200	250	250			These targets relate to the numbers of mentees involved in active eMentoring relationships. 70% of these mentees will be expected to be from WP target groups. We are on target to meet target of 200 active relationships in 2014/15 and will continue to grow this project in 2015/16 and then maintain growth at 250 active relationships, which is the maximum capacity of our license.

3	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Delivery of campus-based experiences, including residential activities	No	2009/10	2018	2250	2500	2500			These target numbers relate to the total number of learners engaged in campus-based events. The total number of learners will be expected to have at least a 70% representation from WP groups. We expect to meet this target in 2014/15 and anticipate growth over coming years due to expansion of our campus-based outreach activities including residential.
4	Outreach / WP activity (collaborative - please give details in the next column)	Deliver in-school activities as part of collaborative pre-16 ambassador work with other HEIs	Yes	2009/10	1500	1000	1000	1000			This target relates to projects delivered collaboratively with other HEIs. The number of learners reached through collaborative work in this area will be focused on pre-16 school in-reach only. We are no longer running the IAG Roadshow in collaboration with Staffordshire University but have increased other collaborative activity such as the Explore University scheme and involvement with the HEI Group - the target has therefore been adjusted down to reflect these changes.
5	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Deliver in-school activities over and above collaborative provision	No	2009/10	500	1000	1000	1000			Learners reached via in reach to schools through outlined projects in addition to above collaborative work. The target relates to our Keele Ambassadors Students in Schools scheme (KLASS). We are on track to meet this target in 2013/14 but the project has reached capacity at 1000 learners.
6	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Parent Ambassadors engagement with local community and learner/parent events	No	2009/10	15	30	35	40			This target relates to the number of activities involving learners' parents that the parent ambassadors engage in with partner schools and colleges. We have seen some growth in this project but it has been slower than anticipated, so we plan to grow to 40 parent ambassadors for 2016/17 and maintain this number there onwards.
7	Student support services	Develop a Peer-support programme that supports UG students as they make the transition into Keele	No	2010/11	12	400/820	450/900	450/900			The project is now established and available for every Keele student. There are significant numbers of current Keele students applying for the role of Mentor as well as high numbers of new students requesting a mentor. Milestones and targets have therefore been upwardly revised but a peak has been predicted for the 15/16 academic year.
8	Student support services	Deliver pre-arrival residential 'Summer School' for students with disabilities and their supporters.	No	n/a	n/a	45	50	55			The target numbers relate to the number of disabled students and their supporters who have accessed this event in previous years. This number, does, however have a limited due to the students that the programme aims to support and enable.
9	Student Support Services	Develop a pre-arrival support programme to support students as they make the transition to life as Keele students. To incorporate activity relevant to a range of underrepresented student groups, i.e. Disabled, Mature, Local etc	No	n/a	n/a	120	175	250			The programme aims to build upon the success of specific programmes delivered in 11/12 and 12/13. It is anticipated the programme will attract a range of students in 14/15 and will gain momentum in following years, as such we have set ourselves the task of increasing our attendance by over 100% for the 16/17 academic year.

10	Contextual data	Keele wishes to explore the introduction of contextual data into its application process	No	n/a	n/a	Wider roll-out	Wider roll-out	Wider roll-out			The work on contextual data relates to the application cycle for each of the milestone years. The pilot will be working with our highly selective course; wider roll-out will evaluate the impact of the new fees system on admissions and expand to include any additional programmes which have become selective and full roll-out will be the application of contextual data processes to all programmes.
11	Student support services	Introduce a DSA Roadshow, to enable students to gain an insight into the benefits of DSA and to ensure ease of application.	No	n/a	n/a	40	80	120			The baseline year (14/15) indicates approximately 10% of students who apply for DSA do so via a DSA roadshow. It is expected that as the approach is recognised by the Keele staff and student body and that we see a 100% growth for the 15/16 academic year and a further 50% growth the following year.
12	Student support services	Deliver specific career planning events for students with additional needs	No	n/a	n/a	15	20	25			This target relates to delivering support to students on our Foundation Year programme for visually-impaired students and students with Asperger's Syndrome
13	Student support services	Develop and deliver networking events enabling students to meet with professionals and alumni	Yes	n/a	n/a	20	30	50			We continue to offer our students opportunities to develop their networking skills through facilitating events with alumni in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals Group and plan to further develop these events over the coming years. The target relates to number of students attending.
14	Student support services	Organise Law market place event enabling students to network with legal professionals - offering insight to professional careers	Yes	n/a	n/a	30	40	50			This target relates to the number of students attending a specific Law networking event in collaboration legal executives and other providers of legal practice courses
15	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Attend in-school events such as Careers, Options and Parents' evenings	No	n/a	n/a	50	60	70			We continue to attend an increasing number of school and college events, and as such have set challenging targets relating to this area to support schools with their IAG activity
16	Outreach / WP activity (other - please give details in the next column)	Further develop the Keele Governor's Network and grow the number of Keele governors in partner schools/ colleges	No	n/a	n/a	5	5	5			We currently have a network of around 30 Keele governors. This target relates to new Keele governors appointed to target schools and colleges over a single academic year

**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.