



Queen Mary, University of London

Access Agreement 2015-16

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is Queen Mary's Access Agreement for 2015-16. It demonstrates the College's commitment to maintaining its strong tradition and good track record in supporting widening participation and fair access in the face of higher tuition fees and the new arrangements for funding higher education introduced in September 2012. It builds on the 2014-15 Access Agreement submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), sets out Queen Mary's tuition fee charges for new entrants from September 2015, and describes the programme of additional access measures that will be put in place to ensure that the College continues to recruit and support talented students from all backgrounds.
- 1.2 The National Strategy for Access and Student Success was published by the Department for Business, Innovations and Skills in April 2014. The three overarching themes of a whole student lifecycle approach, the need for evidence-based practice, and the importance of effective collaboration and partnership are reflected throughout this access agreement, and addressed specifically in sections 4 and 6.

SECTION 2: TUITION FEE CHARGES FROM SEPTEMBER 2015

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Queen Mary's 2010-15 Strategic Plan sets out as its key objective that the College "will build on its distinctive position as a leading research-based higher education institution with a strong commitment to engagement in its London location, to be fully established by 2015 within the top ten universities in the UK on the basis of objective and widely respected criteria"¹. Alongside this ambition, Queen Mary has an equally strong commitment to maintaining the diversity of its student intake. According to 2012-13 HESA undergraduate student data, 58% of Queen Mary's students are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, and 9% of undergraduate students have declared themselves as disabled. Women make up 51% of the undergraduate student cohort. In addition, we have an excellent record in attracting talented students from a wide range of social backgrounds. We are proud of the diversity of our students and of our reputation in promoting widening participation and the social mobility that this supports.

2.2 Charges for tuition fees for new entrants in 2015-16

- 2.2.1 Queen Mary's proposed tuition fees for new entrants from September 2015 are set out in Table 1 of the 2015-16 Resource Plan. These are for full-time students only, as Queen Mary does not currently offer part-time undergraduate courses.
- 2.2.2 Queen Mary has an excellent track record in outreach and widening participation and a strong commitment to supporting students throughout the course of their studies. The cost of maintaining and enhancing performance in these areas is included in this methodology.

¹ 'Queen Mary, University of London Strategic Plan 2010-15', p 5

- 2.2.3 For 2015 entrants the College is proposing to charge £9,000 for all full-time courses. Year 3 of one course (F153: MSci Pharmaceutical Chemistry) is designated as a full-time year with learning in the workplace, and the fees for this year only will be £4,500.
- 2.2.4 Students on year-in-industry placements will be charged £1,800 for this year for all courses.
- 2.2.5 Year-abroad students will be charged £1,350 for the year that they study abroad.

2.3 Real terms inflationary increases from 2016-17

- 2.3.1 Tuition fees for new entrants for all courses will be £9,000 from September 2015. Subsequently, Queen Mary will apply annual increases to fees each year in accordance with the inflationary increases allowed by Government regulations.

SECTION 3: EXPENDITURE ON ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND RETENTION MEASURES

3.1 Assessment of Queen Mary's access and retention record

- 3.1.1 Queen Mary has a strong record in recruiting students from under-represented groups, and we work hard to support student retention, success and employability. As in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 Access Agreements, we have assessed our proportion of under-represented students as slightly above average, and our record on retention as in need of further improvement (although progress is being made in this area). Evidence for this assessment is found in the table below, which uses HESA data for the two-year period from 2011-12 to 2012-13.

	Queen Mary actual performance	HESA benchmark for Queen Mary	HESA location-adjusted benchmark for Queen Mary
2012-13 entrants			
young full-time first-degree entrants from state schools	85.8%	83.9%	81.4%
young full-time first-degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 2)	5.9%	8.2%	5.2%
young full-time first-degree entrants from National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification groups (NS-SEC) 4-7	34.6%	25.5%	26.8%
2011-12 young full-time first degree entrants not in higher education in 2012-13	5.1%	3.5%	
2011-12 entrants			

	Queen Mary actual performance	HESA benchmark for Queen Mary	HESA location-adjusted benchmark for Queen Mary
young full-time first-degree entrants from state schools	83.7%	82.6%	79.8%
young full-time first-degree entrants from low participation neighbourhoods (POLAR 2)	4.7%	7.3%	4.2%
young full-time first-degree entrants from National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification groups (NS-SEC) 4-7	32.5%	23.6%	24.3%
2010-11 young full-time first degree entrants not in higher education in 2011-12	8.9%	4.3%	

3.2 Estimate of expenditure on additional access and retention measures

3.2.1 In 2015-16 we will commit 30% of the additional fee income raised from tuition fees above the basic fee level to support additional outreach and retention measures. Details of how this significant level of additional investment will be spent are set out in Tables 4 and 5 of the 2015-16 Resource Plan. The total countable expenditure for the 2015-16 Access Agreement is £8.45 million.

SECTION 4: PROGRAMME OF ADDITIONAL ACCESS MEASURES

4.1 Demonstrating a strategic approach

4.1.1 Research has indicated that widening participation activities have the greatest impact if they are delivered in a sustained way, as part of a long-term partnership with target schools. The importance of this is also highlighted in the National Strategy for Access and Student Success. In 2015-16 Queen Mary will deliver an extensive outreach programme that will focus on raising student aspiration and achievement and on providing appropriate information, advice and guidance to support students in making the right choices for successful progression to higher education. This will combine projects involving a wide range of schools and colleges with the development of long-term structured interventions with a smaller number of partner schools. The strategic priorities will be:

- delivering long-term sustained outreach programmes with partner schools such as St Paul's Way Trust School and the Drapers' Academy
- targeting outreach activities at students who are the first in their family to consider university, students from lower socio-economics groups (National Statistics Socio-economic Classification Groups 4-7) and students from low-participation neighbourhoods
- improving student success and progression through a range of measures aimed at supporting students from non-traditional backgrounds

- targeting care leavers as a group significantly under-represented in higher education.
- 4.1.2 St Paul’s Way Trust school and the Drapers’ Academy are both schools in areas of severe economic and social deprivation and low progression to higher education. We will focus resources on sustained outreach work with these schools as there is good evidence that this approach has had a positive impact. Examples of this evidence can be found below in sections 4.1.3-4.1.5.
- 4.1.3 St Paul’s Way Trust School in Tower Hamlets has made remarkable progress over the last three years. The 2013 GCSE results show that 58% of students achieved at least five A* to C grades in subjects including English and Mathematics. This is an improvement of 29 percentage points from the 2009 results. The school’s most recent Ofstead report, published in May 2013, judged the school to be outstanding in all categories, and made specific reference to the positive role of Queen Mary as an educational partner. Grahame Price, the Head Teacher, has said that “I am entirely of the opinion that without the strong partnership that we have with Queen Mary we would not today be one of the twenty most improved schools in England”.
- 4.1.4 Since 2010 Queen Mary has been a co-sponsor with the Drapers’ Company of the Drapers’ Academy school in Havering. This is a science and mathematics specialist school that aims to improve educational standards in an area of high worklessness, economic deprivation and low participation rates in higher education. Queen Mary’s work with the school includes staff development support for the new sixth form, a bespoke information, advice and guidance package for Year 7-13 students and mentoring support from Queen Mary undergraduate students. The College provides three governors for the school.
- 4.1.5 The Drapers’ Academy is now one of the fastest improving schools in England, and made excellent progress with their GCSE results in August 2013 when 57% of pupils achieved grades A* to C in five or more subjects including English and Mathematics. This was a significant improvement over two years, with the figure in 2011 being just 36%.

4.2 Widening participation and outreach programme

- 4.2.1 The 2015-16 outreach programme will address the strategic priorities described in section 4.1.1. Examples of targeted long-term work are:
- (i) We are the lead education partner in St Paul’s Way, which is Tower Hamlets’ first Foundation Trust School. Senior members of staff from the College chair the Trust Board and the Governing Body, and the College supports the school through a balanced programme of short and long-term initiatives. As an example of a long-term initiative to support the school, Queen Mary and St Paul’s Way were partners in a bid to the Wellcome Trust for funding for the Authentic Biology project. Authentic Biology is a project that allows sixth-form students in five schools across the country to become biomedical researchers. These students learn sophisticated techniques for analysing and manipulating DNA and protein, and apply

these skills to novel research projects that will make a positive contribution to scientific knowledge. The schools work closely with their local university bioscience/medical department and the projects provide CPD opportunities for all staff involved, teachers and academics. There is an annual research symposium (held at Queen Mary) where students have the opportunity to share their work on posters and as oral presentations. We also support sixth-form teaching through a Teacher Fellowship scheme that links individual sixth-form teachers at St Paul's Way to academic staff at Queen Mary, and supports the professional development of the teachers by partnering them with academics who are working in their field of interest.

- (ii) In 2015-16 the College will continue to work with the Drapers' Company as co-sponsor of the Drapers' Academy school in Havering. Our support includes the provision of three governors, the involvement of academic staff and support for the development of the new sixth form established in September 2012. One of the strengths of this long-term partnership is that we can work with younger students year-on-year to support them in making the correct choices at key stages in their progression. The 2015-16 Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) programme will deliver a range of age-appropriate sessions to students from Years 7-11, and each session will build on the previous one in the following way:

Year 7	Introduction to University
Year 8	Discovering University
Year 9	Getting to University and Finance Workshops
Year 10	Choices for Higher Education and Budgeting Sessions
Year 11	Choices for Year 11

Specific support with UCAS applications and applying to university is provided for students when they reach Year 12.

- (iii) Queen Mary has a well-established partnership with the Bridge Academy School in Hackney, and we will continue to support the school through a range of activities, including a one-to-one-mathematics tutoring scheme and a series of 'maths challenge' activities.
- (iv) We have developed long-term projects such as *Bridge the Gap*, an access to dentistry project that started in September 2012. This is targeted at partner secondary schools and colleges and their feeder primary schools, and aims to raise aspirations and awareness of dentistry as a career pathway among students from groups that are significantly under-represented within the profession. It offers age-appropriate interventions at Year 5-6, Year 8, Year 9-10 and Year 11-12. All students who have completed the *Bridge the Gap* programme, and who meet Queen Mary's minimum entry requirements, will be guaranteed an interview for a place on the undergraduate dentistry course. In addition, it is anticipated that an alternative entry offer for up to four places on the course will be made available for students who have completed the programme. This will be up to two grades lower than the standard entry offer, and only students who

have completed the whole programme will be eligible. The project works with experienced external partners such as Kids Company, who will provide support for the mentoring strand. In 2013-14 Bridge the Gap was expanded to include access to medicine as well as dentistry.

- 4.2.2 Care leavers are significantly under-represented in higher education, and Queen Mary is enhancing its work to support the progression of young people in care and care leavers. We have worked with Buttle UK to design and implement a new programme of support measures, including improved data collection on care leavers. We have a defined package of support for prospective students at Queen Mary and our strategy includes contacting students who declare via the UCAS tick box to advise them of the support available. We have also set up our own monitoring of students at pre-enrolment to capture additional information as required. We will continue to create links with local authorities and further and higher education providers through our contribution to relevant local networks. We aim to utilise this collaboration to deliver outreach activities to students currently in local authority care.
- 4.2.3 In addition to the intensive work with partner schools, we will deliver a broader outreach programme targeted at students from lower socio-economic groups, students from low-participation neighbourhoods and students who are the first in their family to consider university. This programme, includes the innovative work of the *Centre of the Cell* (a bioscience education centre at the heart of our medical school). In 2015-16 we will continue to develop this full range of activities, which will include:
- a summer school programme aimed at students in Years 9-12
 - an Easter revision programme in a range of subjects targeted at AS and A2 students
 - Year 10 and Year 12 masterclass programmes in a range of subjects
 - a school visit programme for primary and secondary school students that will include taster lectures in a range of subjects and question-and-answer sessions with student ambassadors
 - specific curriculum-related activities such as a Physics Practical School, to stretch and challenge A2 level physics students.
- 4.2.4 Application forms for the masterclass and summer school programmes ask for detailed information about the applicant's socio-economic background and whether the student has any close family members who have been to university. Students are selected if there is good evidence that they are in one or more of the key target groups. Whole group activities are targeted at schools that have a high percentage of students from low-participation neighbourhoods, or who are entitled to free school meals.
- 4.2.5 In 2015-16 Queen Mary has allocated £205,000 for the outreach programme delivered through the central widening participation team. This will allow for the continuation and expansion of the summer school, masterclass, curriculum-support, school visit, information, advice and guidance, and care leavers' support programmes. Measurable outcome-based targets have been set for these activities and these are set out in Table 5b.

4.3 Student retention, success and progression

- 4.3.1 We are committed to supporting student retention, success and progression, and we will deliver a programme of activities to enhance this. In 2015-16 we will build on the knowledge obtained from academic schools through research initiatives to deliver a range of interventions that address retention problem areas. These will focus on effective skills support, attendance support, and academic advising and pastoral support. All projects will have a detailed project plan with specific targets and milestones. This work will be monitored and evaluated through Queen Mary's Engagement, Retention and Success Project Group.
- 4.3.2 Queen Mary's Disability and Dyslexia Service will support students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia from the point of application through to graduation. A full-time mental health co-ordinator will provide support for students with mental health issues. The service will assist applicants to the College and contact each successful applicant who declares a disability to begin the process of identifying the support that the student will need to engage successfully with their academic programme. Once the student has enrolled, the Disability and Dyslexia Service will work with them to ensure that they have access to the reasonable adjustments to which they are entitled and to support them in realising their academic potential. The service takes Queen Mary's strategic objectives as they relate to employability very seriously, and works with students to ensure that they graduate with independent learning skills.
- 4.3.3 Queen Mary has noted the announcement from the Minister for Universities and Science on changes that will take place to the allocation of the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) from September 2015. We will assess the impact that this will have on our students, and we have made provision in the £300,000 allocated to the Student Hardship Fund to address any issues arising from this.
- 4.3.4 Queen Mary's Students' Union runs multiple schemes every year which contribute to the transition of school leavers into university as well as enhancing retention and success. One example is the annual peer mentoring scheme which pairs first year students with students in the later years in the same academic school to provide support. The scheme trains current students to provide advice and guidance to new students, helping them develop confidence and make a smooth transition into university life. The Students' Union also runs the Halls Representatives Scheme alongside Residential Support, which aims to increase opportunities to meet people in residences and create additional support networks for students.
- 4.3.5 The Students' Union runs a scheme aimed at enhancing student employment. Working with Queen Mary's Student Services department, the Students' Union has developed and piloted the QM Skills Award. This provides additional training opportunities for students engaged in areas such as societies, volunteering, club sport, and student representation as well as allowing them to log their activity and then reflect on the skills they have developed in the context of their future employment or progression to further study. The Award is similar in nature to, but more comprehensive than, the HEAR adopted by some other HEIs.

4.4 Collaborative working between institutions

- 4.4.1 Queen Mary understands the impact of well-targeted collaborative work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and other external partners. The University of Warwick and Queen Mary entered into a collaborative agreement in 2012, and a substantial branch of this partnership is widening participation. Both institutions' outreach teams are continuing to share good practice and draw on experience of working to widen participation in two quite different geographical areas to enhance and strengthen existing initiatives and approaches. Following successful evaluation of our 2013-14 work we are again delivering a five-day residential summer school in July 2014 split across both institutions' campuses. Maintaining a focus on medicine pathways, this collaborative event will allow participants to understand better two different routes into medicine (via Queen Mary's undergraduate entry course and Warwick's graduate entry course), as well as exposing these participants, who will be likely to consider only local universities, to a different region and the idea of geographical mobility. Queen Mary and the University of Warwick will continue to jointly evaluate all collaborative activities to ensure that plans for activity in 2015-16 are evidence-based.
- 4.4.2 We will continue to commit resources to collaborative work with charities and other external organisations involved in widening participation and access. This will include groups such as Into University, a well established programme that supports young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to progress to higher education, and the Social Mobility Foundation, an education charity that supports high-achieving Year 12 students from low income backgrounds. We will also work in partnership with the Brilliant Club, which recruits, trains and places PhD students in non-selective state schools and sixth-form colleges serving low participation communities. The programme delivers university-style tutorials to small groups of students to help them develop the skills, confidence and ambition needed to secure places at top universities. Additionally, we will support Barts Cancer Institute, and their collaboration with the Access-Work Placements Project, to embed their week-long summer school programme giving Year 12 students first-hand experience of medical research.
- 4.4.3 Queen Mary is also a partner in Capital L, the London consortium of the National Routes into Languages programme. The consortium's 13 partner HEIs collaborate with schools, colleges and a range of other stakeholders to increase the uptake of languages in schools, colleges and universities. In 2013 HEFCE provided the programme with a further three years funding. In 2015-16 we will work with other HEIs in London to increase and widen participation in the study of languages, and promote a range of community and modern foreign languages as a route to employment, social and economic prosperity and civic regeneration.
- 4.4.4 Queen Mary holds the Buttle UK Quality Mark for supporting the progression to higher education of young people who have been in care and care leavers. Having played an active role in local and national networks since 2013, in 2015-16 we will continue to work in collaboration with national bodies such as the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers' Strategic Group, and across London with Local Authorities, HEIs and other relevant organisations. We will increase

our programme of outreach work in this area whilst continuing to contribute to the local, regional and national agenda.

4.5 Financial support for 2015-16 entrants - the Queen Mary Bursary Scheme

- 4.5.1 Queen Mary will provide targeted financial support for students from low-income backgrounds through the Queen Mary Bursary Scheme.
- 4.5.2 The Queen Mary Bursary Scheme will offer a £1,571 cash bursary per year of study to 2015-16 undergraduate entrants who come from households with a residual income of £25,000 or less, and who qualify for a full non-repayable higher education maintenance grant. This has allowed for an inflationary increase for 2015-16 entrants only, to bring the bursary back up to the equivalent of the 2012-13 level of £1,500.
- 4.5.3 We believe that students from slightly better-off backgrounds also need financial support to help with the costs of study. The Queen Mary Bursary Scheme for 2015-16 undergraduate entrants will therefore offer a cash bursary of £1,256 per year of study to students who come from households with residual incomes of between £25,001 and £42,600 and who qualify for a partial non-repayable higher education maintenance grant. This has allowed for an inflationary increase for 2015-16 entrants only, to bring the bursary back up to the equivalent of the 2012-13 level of £1,200.
- 4.5.4 In subsequent years, we expect to apply the annual inflationary increase announced for tuition fees to both the Queen Mary £1,571 bursary and the Queen Mary £1,256 bursary.
- 4.5.5 The Queen Mary Bursary schemes described above will apply to full-time undergraduate students who start a course at Queen Mary in the academic year 2015-16. Students who started a course before the 2015-16 academic year, and who are already in receipt of a bursary, will continue to receive their bursaries based on the current schemes described in the relevant Access Agreement.
- 4.5.6 Queen Mary will provide a Hardship Fund of £300,000 to provide assistance for students who may need extra financial support to access and remain in higher education. The fund will be used to assist students who need extra financial help to meet specific costs that are not already met from statutory or other sources, to help students in financial hardship by providing emergency payments for unexpected financial crises, and to intervene in cases where a student may be considering giving up their course because of financial problems. As described in section 4.3.3, provision has also been made within this allocation to address issues arising from changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance from September 2015.
- 4.5.7 We recognise that we commit a high level of resources to student support, and we will monitor this for impact. We started work on this with a survey of students currently in receipt of a bursary carried out in December 2013. We will repeat this every year to track the impact of financial support. We will also commit funding to research the correlation between socio-economic background and student success, and this will cover the potential impact of financial support for low-

income students.

4.6 Use of contextual data in admissions

4.6.1 We are committed to attracting the most able students from a range of backgrounds, and to ensuring that our admissions processes are able to identify students of outstanding achievement and potential. We are currently assessing a research report by SPA (Supporting Professionalism in Admissions) on the use of contextualised admissions in higher education² We will examine the evidence base; the approaches, practices and methodologies used and how this can add value to professionalism within our admissions, and to support fair admissions, fair access and widening inclusion. We envisage piloting the use of contextual data during the 2015-16 admissions cycle for selected programmes.

4.7 Level of investment as compared to arrangements for previous years

4.7.1 Queen Mary will in 2015-16 commit 30% of the additional fee income raised from tuition fees above £6,000 to support additional access and retention measures, and the detail of how this will be spent is found in Tables 4 and 5 of the 2015-16 Resource Plan. The total countable expenditure for the 2015-16 Access Agreement is £8.45 million, compared to a commitment of £7.98 million for 2014-15.

4.7.2 It is recognised that a high percentage of this expenditure is allocated to student financial support. Queen Mary fully understands the importance of outreach work, and therefore commits substantial resources to support this in addition to the funding allocated through the 2015-16 Access Agreement. This is set out in Table 4 of the Resource Plan.

4.7.3 Examples of this additional spending are the resources committed to the Teacher Fellowship Scheme at St Paul's Way School, and the support for the Authentic Biology research project at the school. We also allocate substantial financial support to the award-winning Centre of the Cell biomedical outreach centre based in the School of Medicine and Dentistry. Academic schools offer taster days and lectures, summer schools, targeted workshops and activities organised around events such as National Science and Engineering Week. Other activities include *cs4fn* (computer science for fun), an innovative widening participation campaign that uses the web, printed magazines and a programme of school outreach activities to inspire young people about computer science and its interaction with other disciplines such as mathematics, physics, biology, philosophy and psychology.

4.7.4 Other outreach work that is not funded through the Access Agreement includes targeted work with local school sixth forms and post-16 institutions. We offer additional support through a range of activities including information, advice and guidance talks to students and their parents and carers, mock university interviews and personal statement workshops, INSET sessions for teachers, attendance at

² 'Contextualised Admissions:Examining the Evidence', Published by SPA, October 2013

partner college in-house careers and higher education events, subject taster afternoons at Queen Mary and research skills workshops to support students studying for the extended project qualification. These activities are targeted carefully, and research has demonstrated that a high percentage of students admitted to Queen Mary from partner schools and colleges are from widening participation cohort groups.

- 4.7.5 Queen Mary Centre for Public Engagement has a major focus on outreach work. It builds upon the extensive tradition of the College in public engagement that can be traced back to the foundation of the People's Palace in the 19th century, and continues to the present day with established activities that include the Centre of the Cell, cs4fn, People's Palace Projects and the Mile End Group. It further reinforces Queen Mary's commitment to engaging with individuals and groups outside the College including schools, government agencies and politicians. The Centre for Public Engagement pulls together existing components of excellence in outreach and engagement activities throughout the College and enhances their profile. It supports student retention, widening participation and social mobility at all levels. Further details are found at <http://www.qmul.ac.uk/publicengagement/>

SECTION 5: PROVISION OF CLEAR INFORMATION TO EXISTING AND PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

5.1 Provision of clear information to existing and prospective students

- 5.1.1 Queen Mary is committed to the clearest possible communication of information to all our students. Information on new tuition fees levels and financial support arrangements from September 2015 will be available on the Queen Mary website from July 2014, together with information about fee levels and financial support for existing students. All information will make it clear that no student will be required to pay fees until after graduation and until they reach specified minimum thresholds of earnings.
- 5.1.2 We will provide clear information to applicants and students about Queen Mary's courses and entry requirements so they are able to understand exactly what they will be studying. This will be provided as web-based information and through our printed prospectus.
- 5.1.3 Provision of clear and accurate information to teachers and to parents and carers is important, as they are in a position to advise and influence students about the financial as well as academic aspects of their future studies. This can play a crucial determining role in deciding whether or not to progress to higher education. The UK Student Recruitment Team will provide information, advice and guidance for schools and sixth-form colleges through regular publications that will include an annual parents' and carers' guide to higher education and a teachers' guide to higher education. There will be five editions annually of *OnQ*, our newsletter for teachers and careers advisers, and these will include regular articles on fees, bursaries and other aspects of student finance. Regular postal mailings of *OnQ* will be supplemented by *Qmail*, an email update magazine for teachers and advisers.

- 5.1.4 Sessions on student finance will be incorporated into outreach activities and will be included in information, advice and guidance work with schools and colleges.
- 5.1.5 We will ensure that clear and timely information on our tuition fee levels and financial support for students is provided for UCAS and the Student Loans Company to enable them to populate their applicant-facing web services.

SECTION 6: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 Current monitoring and evaluation strategy

- 6.1.1 Queen Mary currently monitors the measures set out in its access agreement by:
- (i) using annual HESA statistics and data provided through Queen Mary's Student Information System as clearly measurable evidence of progress towards meeting targets and milestones set out in Annex B.
 - (ii) rigorous evaluation of individual outreach and retention projects, with full evaluation reports produced for each project to inform future planning and to ensure effective targeting.
- 6.1.2 The senior strategic group responsible for monitoring the access agreement is the Marketing, Recruitment and Admissions Group, which is a sub-group of Queen Mary's Senior Executive.

6.2 Developing a more evidence-based framework for widening participation

- 6.2.1 The strategy described in section 6.1 has provided Queen Mary with a sound basis to evaluate the effectiveness of individual widening participation activities, develop and improve them when necessary, and assess them for value for money. Additionally we have now developed our Widening Participation Evaluation and Monitoring Strategy as reported to OFFA in January 2014 as part of the 2012-13 Access Agreement monitoring report. This strategy sets out the trajectory of our future work in this area, the specific steps we will take to demonstrate further the impact of our widening participation work, and how we will embed this practice in the long term. We will invest resources for a new member of staff in the widening participation team to drive forward this work from August 2014.
- 6.2.2 Another example of our approach to evidence-based evaluation is the access to dentistry programme ('Bridge the Gap'), which started in September 2012. A PhD student registered at Queen Mary is undertaking a four-year study of the programme as the basis for her research. The study will follow 'Bridge the Gap' between 2013 and 2016. It will involve the collation of documents and resources developed for the project, and interviews with selected stakeholders (including the children and young people involved in the scheme) over the four-year period. The study will provide a longitudinal evidence-based evaluation of the scheme, and help inform subsequent thinking about widening participation interventions.
- 6.2.3 As part of the Evaluation and Monitoring Strategy we have committed to working closely with our key partner schools to assess the impact of our long-term work. Queen Mary invests a great deal in these relationships, and so do our partner

schools. This provides an ideal opportunity to work together on meaningful evaluation. In particular, we will work with the Drapers' Academy and St Paul's Way Trust school to evaluate the long-term impact of selected programmes such as the Information, Advice and Guidance programme at the Drapers' Academy and the Teacher Fellowship scheme at St Paul's Way School. Work with the schools has already begun on the evaluation of both schemes alongside agreement in principle to scoping out additional areas of evaluation over the coming years.

- 6.2.4 We will embed evidence-based evaluation into our programme of work to support care leavers. As part of our partnership with Buttle UK we complete a Statistical Monitoring Return each year, which requires us to collate and monitor data. Once the Quality Mark is phased out we will continue to use this as a model for collecting and reporting on relevant data. We are working to establish strong links with local authorities, which will help us to engage in a sustained work programme with young people in care and care leavers. Clear monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be built into this from the beginning to gather agreed data from participants and relevant quantitative data from local authorities.
- 6.2.5 In these ways we will ensure that evidence-based evaluation is embedded into new projects and long-term partnership work. Our strategy directs the development of a common framework for the evaluation of established projects such as our summer school programme, undergraduate peer mentoring scheme, curriculum support programmes, information, advice and guidance work and school visit programme. This will have greater emphasis on data collection, follow-through work and focus group discussions, and tracking students to assess impact. In developing the framework we will use existing resources and research evidence.

SECTION 7: TARGETS AND MILESTONES

7.1 Setting targets and milestones

- 7.1.1 OFFA Guidance on producing 2015-16 Access Agreements recognises that the full impact of the new fees regime on application rates, and on the number of entrants from under-represented groups, is not yet clear. It indicates that significant changes to the targets agreed in the 2014-15 access agreement are not expected, and Queen Mary has chosen to maintain the challenging targets agreed for 2014-15. The targets and milestones are set out in Tables 7a and 7b of the 2015-16 Resource Plan.
- 7.1.2 We have a strong record in attracting students from the three main groups identified as under-represented in higher education: state-school students, students from NS-SEC classes 4-7, and those from low participation neighbourhoods. We understand the challenge of sustaining this in the light of the substantial increase in tuition fees from September 2012 and our institutional objective of enhancing the quality of undergraduate intake through higher entry requirements for competitive courses. The targets and milestones are set out in Table 5a, and these are significantly above the HESA location-adjusted benchmarks for students from state schools, low participation neighbourhoods and NS-SEC groups 4-7. We believe that all of these targets are challenging when seen in the context of our 2010-15 Strategic Plan, with its key performance indicator of being placed in the

top decile of UK universities with respect to the entry qualifications of admitted students by 2015. It is because we recognise the challenge of maintaining our above-sector benchmarks performance in widening participation that we have chosen to allocate a high percentage (30%) of the additional fees to access measures.

- 7.1.3 The proportion of first-year full-time first-degree students at Queen Mary in receipt of the Disabled Students Allowance has increased over the two-year period from 2010-11 to 2012-13. We aim to ensure that the new tuition fee charges do not impact negatively on the proportion of disabled students at Queen Mary, and we have set a target to ensure that this increase is maintained over the next five years.
- 7.1.4 Queen Mary has committed significant resources to supporting and improving student retention, success and employability. This is reflected in a target to improve the successful completion rate for our students over a five-year period. For this target we will use baseline and reporting data from our own Student Information System rather than HESA data, as this will allow us greater flexibility to generate and analyse detailed reports.
- 7.1.5 There is an outreach target in Table 7b to reflect our collaborative work with the University of Warwick.

SECTION 8: CONSULTING WITH STUDENTS

8.1 Involving students in drawing up the Access Agreement and organising outreach activities

- 8.1.1 We value the contribution made by Queen Mary's students to both the planning and delivery of our widening participation programme. Submission of the 2015-16 Access Agreement was managed by an OFFA Access Monitoring Group that was chaired by the Vice Principal (Teaching and Learning) and reported directly to Queen Mary's Senior Executive. The group comprised appropriate senior managers from the College and two representatives from Queen Mary's Students' Union: the Vice President for Education and the Vice President for Welfare.
- 8.1.2 We have worked with the Students' Union to evaluate the effectiveness of Queen Mary's bursary programme. We have collected information from students who have received bursaries about their attitudes towards the programme, and the impact that it has had on them. The findings have informed our decisions on the continuation of the Queen Mary bursary schemes in 2015-16.
- 8.1.3 We aim to develop our capacity to facilitate more student involvement in widening participation activities and build on our partnership with the Students' Union by collaborating more closely on some of the Students' Union initiatives aimed at enhancing retention, success and progression detailed in section 4.3.

SECTION 9: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

9.1 Compliance with responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010

9.1.1 The purpose of the 2015-16 Access Agreement is to support and encourage progression to higher education from groups currently under-represented. The main target groups identified as under-represented in higher education are state-school students, students from low participation neighbourhoods, and students from NS-SEC Groups 4-7. Students with disabilities are also under-represented in higher education, and there is a specific target to improve the representation from this group of students. The Access Agreement also supports a fair access policy that seeks to ensure that all applications are assessed fairly to identify whether they are appropriately qualified to succeed in the relevant academic programme. No aspect of this Access Agreement is likely to have an adverse affect on any member of the nine key groups defined as having protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

9.1.2 Queen Mary is an international and diverse community, and promoting equality is essential to make it a world-class institution. We are committed to providing an environment for students and staff where respect is shown to all and where everyone is enabled to achieve their full potential. The College has a comprehensive action plan to ensure that it fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010, and this supports the objectives of the 2015-16 Access Agreement in a number of key areas. There are detailed actions plans to:

- enhance gender equality for staff and students
- reduce the attainment gap by ethnicity and investigate the withdrawal of black and minority students
- enhance access to Queen Mary's buildings and virtual environment
- ensure that disabled students and staff feel supported at work and study, and that disability awareness is raised among students and staff
- promote a culture in the College where staff and students can be themselves
- ensure adequate facilities and policies are in place to allow the practice of religion and promote good interfaith relations
- ensure students of different ages have access to support and facilities required.

9.1.3 Full details of work in each of these areas can be found at <http://www.hr.qmul.ac.uk/equality/equalityobjectives/index.html>

9.1.4 All the activities in the widening participation programme described in the Access Agreement are open to everyone in the target cohorts of under-represented groups. Selection is based on this alone, and applicants are judged against clear criteria that are discussed and agreed with participating schools and delivery partners. All activities are advertised widely to targeted schools and colleges to ensure maximum take-up.

9.1.5 Activities described in the strategy have been designed to ensure that they will appeal to everyone in the relevant target groups. For example, science and

engineering summer schools are designed to cover a wide range of engineering subjects to try to encourage higher take-up from girls, who often do not apply for these activities in the same numbers as boys. Section 6 of the Access Agreement describes how all outreach projects will be evaluated rigorously, and patterns of take-up will be monitored as part of this process.