

Access Agreement with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) 2017-18

1. Summary

1.1 This Agreement is submitted in accordance with the requirements placed on those higher education institutions that intend to charge above the basic rate¹ of tuition fee for Home/EU students commencing full-time undergraduate courses in 2017-18. This Agreement and those preceding it have been prepared in accordance with the guidance from OFFA² and after extensive consideration by relevant joint committees of the collegiate University, which have included student representation.³

1.2 The key features of the Agreement are:

- the higher rate⁴ of tuition fee (ie the maximum rate set by the Government annually, including increases permitted through eg the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)) to be charged, irrespective of course followed, to full-time UK and EU⁵ undergraduates and Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) students admitted from October 2017 onwards;
- a needs-based financial support package that will provide support for maintenance for those undergraduates from lower-income households;
- a range of outreach activities appropriate to currently under-represented and disadvantaged groups, with a focus on improving measurable outcomes for participants;
- challenging milestones, aimed at increasing the proportion of our UK undergraduate intake from particular groups and contributing to improved social mobility for the sector without compromising the integrity of Cambridge's admissions procedures and entry standards;
- the establishment of a research function to understand better the nature of under-representation and the impact of different interventions on access to highly selective higher education.

2. The Context of Undergraduate Admission to Cambridge

2.1 The collegiate University's policy is to admit students of the highest academic calibre and potential irrespective of financial or other non-academic considerations. In conducting our admission process the University and its Colleges adhere to the five principles set out in the independent review of Admissions to Higher Education led by Professor Schwartz in September 2004.⁶ A fair admissions system should:

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

¹ It is expected that the "basic rate" for 2017-18 will be set at £6,165 for full-time courses.

² "How To Produce An Access Agreements for 2017-18", Office For Fair Access, Mar 2016.

³ In particular, the Undergraduate Admissions Committee (UAC) and University Council. The membership of both bodies includes representatives of the Cambridge University Students' Union, as did the group tasked with producing this document.

⁴ It is expected that the "higher rate" for 2017-18 will be set at £9,250 for full-time courses.

⁵ In the case of EU undergraduates, provided that UK law continues to permit EU undergraduates to be charged at a lower rate than is charged to other overseas students – see paragraph 4.3 below.

⁶ www.admissions-review.org.uk

- 2.2 The standard A-level offer for undergraduate entry to Cambridge is currently A*AA for most arts and humanities subjects and A*A*A for most science subjects.⁷ There is a large pool of qualified applicants and competition is keen: in 2014-15, only 27.6% of 9,476 applicants from UK schools and colleges were accepted, and of those 85.7% exceeded the standard offer (the average number of A*s achieved by entrants was 2.82).
- 2.3 The University does not operate subject quotas, although some courses are subject to external controls (for example, medicine) or capacity restrictions (for example, architecture and some laboratory-based courses) and competition is open across all subjects. Because of the full-time, residential nature of Cambridge's undergraduate courses, it is unlikely that the University's undergraduate intake will significantly increase over the next five years.
- 2.4 We are also mindful of the implications of the difficulties being experienced by parts of the state sector in student take-up and teaching provision in a number of subjects that are critical for entry into many of our courses, including modern languages, mathematics and physical science subjects. Additionally, and as noted by the Russell Group, a lower proportion of state-sector students overall achieve top grades compared with those in the independent sector (see section 7.10), and state-sector students are less likely to apply to selective universities.⁸
- 2.5 We have in place rigorous selection processes (which includes the assessment of academic record in the context of data about the applicant, their school and their geodemographic background, interviewing c.78% of UK and EU applicants, use of aptitude tests such as BMAT⁹, examinations such as STEP Mathematics¹⁰ and, from 2016, common-format written admissions assessments. See further section 2.10). These are intended to identify, as precisely as possible, the highest achievers with the greatest potential from the pool of applicants who are capable of meeting our entry requirements and the demands of our intensive undergraduate programmes.
- 2.6 Whilst we shall continue to monitor the University examination performance of students from the various school backgrounds, our research shows that performance in public examinations continues to be the best predictor of a student's likely performance once admitted to the University, and that there is no significant differential in terms of performance between students admitted by school sector.¹¹ This reflects HEFCE studies which show that the differential performance of students at University by school type closes at the highest A-level attainment levels¹². We find therefore no value in making differential offers to applicants based on their school type; indeed to do so would disadvantage the students that such measures are designed to help because, if admitted, students who had performed less well in public examinations would then have a greater learning challenge compared to those students who had met or exceeded the standard offer.

A-Level Reform

- 2.7 We are concerned that A-level reforms currently being implemented are already significantly reducing student choice and flexibility. Public examinations at the end of Year 12 have until now provided most UK students and their advisers with an objective and meaningful measure of how well the transition from GCSE to Sixth Form study has been made. These results indicated progress and enabled students to make informed decisions about which subjects to focus on in Year 13 and beyond. In future the lack of formal end of Year 12 examinations taken in all subjects studied will, we believe, adversely affect student confidence in making these decisions (as well as the quality of the advice they receive about higher education options), and also make it more difficult for institutions such as Cambridge to assess accurately current academic performance and trajectory.

⁷ Our entrance requirements are set at an equivalent level for those studying within other qualifications systems.

⁸ www.russellgroup.ac.uk/russell-group-latest-news/137-2011/4808-hesa-performance-indicators--russell-group-comment/

⁹ BioMedical Admissions Test, www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/bmat/

¹⁰ Sixth Term Examination Paper, www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/step/about-step/

¹¹ "ANOVA on A*s at A-level and Tripos performance", Sumnall, Jul 2015, www.cao.cam.ac.uk/anova-level-and-tripos-performance

¹² "Differences in degree outcomes: Key findings", HEFCE Mar 2014, www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2014/201403/#d.en.86821

- 2.8 Once fully implemented, these reforms could have a significant bearing on our ability to make progress on access measures¹³ because our quantitative research shows that UMS scores, which will no longer be available to us, provide the single best indicator of academic achievement and potential, and are significantly superior to GCSEs in this respect.¹⁴ Independent research conducted by the University of Bristol supports this view.¹⁵ We note that the removal of UMS takes the sector one step further away from a post-qualification admissions process, placing more reliance on GCSEs which are 18 months old at the point of application, and which were taken when the applicant was academically less mature, rather than on AS-level qualifications taken just 4 months previously.
- 2.9 We are also concerned that proposed funding arrangements will effectively restrict students in many state schools to taking three A-levels, meaning that the opportunity to study extremely valuable fourth subjects, such as Further Mathematics, would be lost. This has influenced our decision to provide greater support for mathematics to disadvantaged groups in future (see section 7.10).

Contextual Data

- 2.10 The collegiate University already makes extensive use of contextual data to support its outreach activity and admissions process.¹⁶ Alongside indicators of academic ability and potential such as GCSE scores, AS-level UMS scores (where they remain available), teacher predictions and references, and tests such as BMAT, we consider:
- geodemographic data – the socio-economic characteristics of an applicant’s local area (using OAC¹⁷), and rates of progression to higher education in an applicant’s local area (using POLAR3¹⁸);
 - school/college data – school GCSE performance¹⁹, and recent school/college history of entry to Cambridge or Oxford; and
 - data on individual circumstances – whether an applicant has spent time in care at some point (declared in the UCAS application), and any information provided in the Extenuating Circumstances Form (where submitted) concerning educational disruption or disadvantage through health or personal problems, disability or difficulties with schooling.
- 2.11 Given the loss of AS-level UMS scores we have been compelled to develop additional measures to assist us in making the finely grained decisions that are necessary when selecting from an exceptionally strong field. The resulting common-format written admissions assessments (taken either before or at interview, depending on subject applied for), will be introduced for those students applying in Autumn 2016.²⁰ We will carefully monitor the use of this additional data in our admissions process to ensure that it assists in the assessment of potential and produces equitable outcomes for all groups of students when all other factors are accounted for (see further section 7.20).

3. Our Record On Access and Student Success

Student Success

- 3.1 The collegiate University provides unusually individualised and intensive support to its students. Regular supervisions involve very small groups and all undergraduates have a Director of Studies, typically in their own College, who closely manages their academic progress, as well as a personal

¹³ See letter to the Right Hon Michael Gove MP, www.cao.cam.ac.uk/files/rfc/rfc_reform_of_gce_alevels_mgmp.pdf

¹⁴ “Predictive Effectiveness of Metrics In Admissions”, Partington, Apr 2011, <http://www.cao.cam.ac.uk/admissions-research/alevels-degree-potential>

¹⁵ “University Admissions and the Prediction of Degree Performance: an Analysis in the Light of Changes to the English Schools’ Examination System”, R.Johnston et al., Higher Education Quarterly, Jan 2015. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hequ.12067/pdf>

¹⁶ For further information see www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/info/contextualdata.html

¹⁷ Output Area Classifications, see www.opengeodemographics.com

¹⁸ Participation Of Local Areas, www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/POLAR/

¹⁹ Taken from the DfE National Pupil Database, www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-pupil-database

²⁰ www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admissions-assessments

Tutor in their College to advise and support them on pastoral issues. College-based support is complemented by lectures, seminars, and practical classes, organised by Faculties and Departments, which are increasingly specialised in the later years of the course. Students benefit from high-quality College accommodation which is available to all undergraduates for at least three years of each course, and also from extensive medical, disability and counselling support. All of this contributes to an unusually high academic attainment and very low drop-out rate.

- 3.2 Our ability to identify students likely to succeed and the quality of the educational experience offered is demonstrated by the proportion of students (c. 80%)²¹ gaining at least Upper Second Class Honours. Feedback from students recorded in the National Student Survey is consistently high (currently four percentage points higher than the sector average, at 90%).²²
- 3.3 We have one of the highest continuation rates of any UK higher education institution (currently 98.0% compared to 90.9% for the sector).²³ This is in part a product of high contact hours, the pastoral care provided by our Colleges and the student support facilities provided, but is also assisted by the extensive financial support that we offer to our students (see section 6). Our research to date shows little significant variation between groups in terms of their likelihood of completion, but we will continue to monitor this as our access activities contribute to a wider diversity of intake.
- 3.4 Our graduates are more likely to be in work or further study (or both) six months after graduation than is the case nationally, are more likely to be in graduate-level jobs (currently 91% compared to 68% for the sector), and have amongst the best starting salaries in the UK (currently £24,494 compared to £20,500 for first degree graduates nationwide).²⁴ Our research shows that Cambridge graduates from low-income households are as successful in the employment market as their higher-income peers.²⁵ Our analysis shows that there is no differential in starting salaries for Cambridge graduates by school type, POLAR quintile or socio-economic status, and that non-white students have higher starting salaries. We do find evidence that females have lower starting salaries than males; this reflects national data and will be the focus of further attention by relevant teaching committees.²⁶
- 3.5 Since the University exceeds national measures in relation to retention and student success and has a strong record in relation to progression, the targets that it sets for itself will continue to focus primarily on outreach and admissions (see section 7). We will nonetheless continue to monitor routinely the relative progression of groups of students whilst at Cambridge and their subsequent career trajectories.

Admissions

- 3.6 We take our commitment to widening access seriously, and are transparent about our record. Since 2011, annual reports setting out applications, offers and acceptances by school type, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background and disability have been publicly available on the admissions website,²⁷ and for years prior to that can be found in the special issues of the Cambridge University Reporter held online.²⁸
- 3.7 The University has made significant progress in admissions on access measures. Taking the 2011 year of entry (ie the year prior to the introduction of fees at the higher rate of £9000 pa) as a baseline, state-sector admissions at Cambridge have risen by 4.4 percentage points (to 62.4% for 2014 entry);

²¹ University of Cambridge Examination Results and Degree Statistics, Table TS01a, Classified Honours examination results, www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/planning/sso/examinations/es_2015_corrected.pdf

²² <http://www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-engagement/university-wide-surveys/nss#key>

²³ HESA Performance Indicators 2012-13, Table T3a, www.hesa.ac.uk/pis/noncon; all entrants, percentage who continue or qualify at same institution.

²⁴ Destination of Leavers (DLHE) 2013-14, Tables 5a and 6, www.hesa.ac.uk/stats-dlhe, and comparable Cambridge source data. Figures are for mean salaries.

²⁵ Analysis of relative employment outcomes for those students receiving an award through the Cambridge Bursary Scheme conducted by Cambridge Careers Service in February 2015.

²⁶ "Destinations of leavers from higher education: initial results", Sumnall, July 2015.

²⁷ www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/apply/statistics

²⁸ www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/

ethnic minority admissions have increased by 4.1 points (to 18.8%); admissions from student in low participation neighborhoods (ie POLAR3 quintile 1) have increased by 1.0 percentage point (to 3.5%), and POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 have risen by 1.1 points (to 10.3%). The number of students admitted by Cambridge who claim Disability Support Allowance has exceeded the HESA Performance Indicator for each of the last 4 years.²⁹ Our analysis of gender data shows that Cambridge admissions broadly mirror the sector once the mix of subjects offered by Cambridge is taken into account.

(Note that we cannot make any assessment of our position in relation to other protected characteristics at the current time since no comparable national data are available – see Section 8.5).

Table 1: University of Cambridge Admissions Metrics 2011-14

Year Of Entry	State Sector	BME	POLAR3 Q1	POLAR Q1+Q2
2011	58.0%	14.7%	2.5%	9.2%
2012	63.3%	16.4%	3.6%	10.3%
2013	61.2%	15.8%	3.7%	10.0%
2014	62.4%	18.8%	3.5%	10.3%

3.8 The collegiate University aims to attract the best and brightest students in the UK, regardless of background. In order to ensure that we maintain progress we have set challenging targets in relation to state-sector entry, and admissions from low participation areas and socio-economically disadvantaged groups (see section 7).

3.9 We would note, however, that the primary factor affecting admission by under-represented and disadvantaged groups to highly selective institutions such as Cambridge is prior attainment. As indicated in section 2 above, the average student admitted to the University holds at least A*A*A at A-level. According to data from UCAS,³⁰ 7.8% of A-level students nationally who applied to HE attained at this level. However students from low participation neighborhoods are half as likely to attain at that level, and Black students are half as likely again. And so, for example, when Cambridge admitted 35 black students in 2014, this was out of a total national pool of just 125 whose attainment reflected the University admissions profile. Research suggests that students who claimed Free School Meals or who were previously in local authority care also present in disproportionately low numbers at this level of attainment.

Table 2: National Attainment and University of Cambridge Admissions 2014

Students	National A-level Admits	National A*A*A+ Admits	Proportion Securing A*A*A	Cambridge Admits	Cambridge Admits as % of National A*A*A+ Admits
All	147935	11605	7.8%	2200	19.0%
POLAR3 Q1	12680	470	3.7%	93	19.8%
Black ethnicity	6010	125	2.1%	35	28.0%

Outreach

3.10 We will continue to monitor our performance in admissions for its effectiveness and fairness. However, we believe that, given the national context, the two key challenges for selective universities are to find ways to attract those students who are already attaining at required levels but who may not have the aspiration to apply or the support required to do so successfully, and to enhance the educational trajectory of younger students through longer-term programmes to grow the pool of those who are attaining at the right level.

3.11 In support of these objectives, the University, its Colleges and its students (including the Cambridge University Students' Union and College Access Officers) are currently engaged in an unprecedented

²⁹ HESA Performance Indicators 2012-13, Table T7, www.hesa.ac.uk/pis/dsa

³⁰ www.ucas.com/corporate/data-and-analysis/ucas-undergraduate-releases/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resource-4

level of additional outreach activity (funded from additional fee income and other sources), which reaches a diverse range of under-represented groups across the UK. These include children in care; students eligible (or previously eligible) for Free School Meals; black and minority ethnicity students; mature learners; students educated in further education colleges; and bright students in schools and colleges which have not historically sent students to the University of Cambridge. Examples are as below:

(a) Area Links Scheme³¹

Target Groups: Various; National Reach

Created in 2000, the College Area Links Scheme ‘links’ every local authority in the UK with a Cambridge College. The Scheme is a tool for communication and vehicle for outreach that enables the Cambridge Colleges to build effective, coherent relationships with schools and sixth form colleges – and develop an understanding of local educational contexts – across the UK. This work is delivered by College admissions staff, fellows, schools liaison officers and students.

In the 2014-15 academic year, through the Area Links Scheme, Colleges recorded over 100,000 student interactions and over 5,900 teacher interactions through engagement with more than 5,100 schools and colleges at over 2,200 events. This is supplemented by the work of the four Colleges which only admit mature students; such students are returning to education post-compulsory education and sit outside of standard school and college networks.

All Colleges are willing to provide information and advice, and to listen to teachers’ perspectives, as well as seeking prospective students’ views, on what can be done to help make Cambridge as accessible as possible to any student with the ability and potential to study at the University.

(b) Sutton Trust Summer Schools³²

Target Groups: Year 12; State Sector; First In Family; Free School Meals; POLAR Q1+2; In Care

The Cambridge Sutton Trust Summer Schools are week-long, subject-specific residentials, where participants live and study as if they were Cambridge students. The aim is to help participants make an informed decision about what they want to do next, whatever subject, university or route they are considering.

Participants are taught by leading Cambridge academics who are experts in their subject, who guide them through new areas of study and introduce them to the depth and breadth of a Cambridge undergraduate course. The subject timetables are varied, with opportunities for participants to undertake their own research project, participate in seminars, laboratory sessions or fieldwork, take advantage of the University’s world-class facilities and experience the small group teaching offered by Cambridge’s supervision system.

The Sutton Trust Summer Schools programme at Cambridge has increased in size each year since 2010, with close to 600 places available in 2016, making it one of the largest widening participation residential programmes in the UK. It is worth noting that, although it is not an explicit aim of the programme, in 2015 some 35.8% of attendees on our Sutton Trust Summer Schools were from an ethnic minority background.

(c) Experience Cambridge

Target Groups: Year 12; State Sector; First In Family; Free School Meals; POLAR Q1+2; In Care

³¹ www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges/area-links

³² www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/events/summer-schools

Experience Cambridge is an initiative that has been running since 2012 which is designed to give participants an insight into teaching and study at the University, and the opportunity to explore their preferred subject area in depth.

The initiative combines two day visits to the University consisting of subject masterclasses on topics outside the school curriculum, opportunities to visit Cambridge Colleges and talks on how to make a competitive university application. Alongside the Cambridge visits, participants complete an online academic project with support from their peers and an academic co-ordinator. The number of subject-specific strands of Experience Cambridge is growing year-on-year. In 2016, a place on one of thirteen strands of Experience Cambridge will be offered to around 600 Year 12 students who had applied to take part in a Cambridge Sutton Trust Summer School, but who were not offered a place despite being a competitive Summer School applicant. We expect some 300 students to engage with Experience Cambridge.

(d) Insight³³

Target Groups: Years 9-11; State Sector; Black and minority ethnicity students; Free School Meals

Insight is a progressive programme which works with highly able students in Years 9-11, with the aim of developing their academic interests and helping them to make informed decisions about their future educational choices.

Schools with above average proportions of students in receipt of Free School Meals and in areas of high ethnic diversity are particularly targeted and invited to nominate students to take part. Students who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding are prioritised.

Participants explore academic subjects that are not taught in school and have the opportunity to talk to our academic staff and student ambassadors about subject choices. There are also sessions on developing skills that will be helpful during further study and on university life, which aim to alleviate worries regarding topics such as the admissions process and student finance.

Students are invited to take part in five 'core' day events and have the opportunity to attend up to six optional subject-based days per year. At the end of Year 10, students visit Cambridge overnight to work on an intensive academic project in small groups and the programme culminates with a four-night summer residential event at the end of Year 11.

(e) Sutton Scholars

Target Groups: Years 9-10; State Sector; rural and coastal deprivation; working class students

In partnership with the Sutton Trust we have launched the 'Sutton Scholars' programme in East Anglia for students in Years 9 and 10, to address some of the particular challenges faced by white working class young people living in areas of rural and coastal deprivation, and low social mobility. Currently five schools around Kings Lynn and six around Great Yarmouth, all with below average GCSE attainment, have enthusiastically engaged with the programme.

The programme works with over 100 students in Years 9 and 10 to develop participants' academic interests, stretching them beyond their studies in school, and to provide them with information and insights into applying to and studying at university.

Working with ten highly-able students from each participating school, the programme is focused on supporting schools with higher than average levels of disadvantage and lower rates of attainment in comparison to local and national averages. Students are given the opportunity to visit Cambridge and other partner universities (50% of students surveyed at the start of the

³³ www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/outreach/insight

programme in 2014-15 had never visited a university before) and to complete an academic project led by a Cambridge postgraduate student.

(f) Realise

Target Groups: Year 7+; In Care

The University of Cambridge holds the Buttle UK Quality Mark, in recognition of our commitment to supporting prospective applicants who are or have spent time in care, and our care-leaver students during their time at the University. Although the Quality Mark is being discontinued, the University undertakes to maintain its commitment at the same level.

Engaging with children in care and care leavers is a high priority for the University. Care status is a priority selection criterion for outreach events run by the Cambridge Admissions Office. Children in care can apply for funding towards travel to open days and other events at Cambridge and time spent in care is also flagged in our admissions process, in order to ensure that these students' educational and social context is carefully considered by our selectors. Those admitted are offered additional financial support and year-round accommodation.

Every year, we also run a series of events for care leavers aged 11-18 of all abilities as part of our Realise initiative, which aims to inspire more young people in care to consider higher education. Two hundred children in care attended a Realise event at the University in 2014-15, with hands-on sessions on varied subjects such as politics and elections, engineering, international development, theatre studies and astronomy.

(g) HE+³⁴

Target Groups: Year 12; State Sector; High POLAR Q1+2; National Reach

HE+ is a collaborative outreach initiative partnering the University and its Colleges with consortia of state schools and colleges within a particular geographical region. In each consortium, teachers work together with Cambridge staff to develop a bespoke programme of activity that is delivered through a combination of sessions in the local area and in Cambridge. Students have the opportunity to take part in academic extension classes, subject masterclasses, information and advice sessions, and visits to the University.

The programme engages highly-able Year 12 students in a sustained year-long programme of super-curricular academic enrichment activity and application advice and support. It also fosters and supports the sharing of good practice between schools and colleges in helping students to make competitive applications to selective HEIs.

Since it started in 2010-11 more than 10,000 Year 12 students across the UK have taken part in the programme. There are currently 110 schools and colleges involved across 14 consortia.

An open access website (www.myheplus.com), which provides academic extension resources created by Cambridge academics and postgraduates in support of the aims of the project, was launched in 2015.

(h) CUSU Shadowing Scheme³⁵

Target Groups: State Sector; First In Family

The Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU) Shadowing Scheme provides the opportunity for Year 12 state school students and mature learners from widening participation backgrounds to experience life as a Cambridge student.

³⁴ www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/find-out-more/widening-participation/he-plus

³⁵ www.applytocambridge.com/shadowing/

The CUSU Shadowing Scheme is the largest, most well-established student-led access initiative in the country, well-known and well-respected amongst UK state schools.

Each year the Shadowing Scheme takes at least 350 academically talented students, and pairs each of them with a Cambridge undergraduate studying a subject in which they are interested. Shadows stay in Cambridge for two nights and three days in accommodation provided by Cambridge Colleges, accompanying their undergraduate mentor to academic and social activities, getting a feel for a wide range of aspects of life as a student at Cambridge; they are also given advice about making a competitive application.

In 2015, 418 Year 12 students took part in the scheme, of whom 89 applied to the University of Cambridge in the 2015-16 application cycle, and 27 were made an offer.

(i) Departmental Outreach

Target Groups: Various

During the 2012-13 academic year the University created a Widening Participation Project Fund, the purpose of which was to enable our Faculties and Departments to submit proposals and bid for funds to create or develop widening participation projects.

The fund allocates around £250,000 per annum to a diverse range of projects, which to date have included projects for state-sector students around Archaeology, Physics, Languages, Music, Law, Veterinary Medicine, Theology, Classics and the Cambridge Museums.

- 3.12 Much of our outreach work is delivered in collaboration with other higher education institutions, schools and colleges, and third-party organisations, and we will continue to support this work. In addition to the Sutton Trust, we also collaborate with Teach First on an Easter School programme for over 200 students annually, and each year the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford take Student Conferences to stadia in 8 locations across the UK, and engage with c.8500 highly able students and c.980 teachers from almost 700 schools. These events ensure that geography is no barrier to exploring what the two institutions have to offer. This year the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford are using funding secured through HEFCE's National Networks for Collaborative Outreach initiative to enhance the outreach work they deliver across the UK.
- 3.13 The University also has a long-standing commitment to public engagement through its Science Festival,³⁶ Festival of Ideas and the work of its libraries and museums which reaches a wide range of age groups including primary and early secondary school children. In 2015, for example, the Science Festival was comprised of 300 events and reached nearly 45,000 people.
- 3.14 We know that this work is having an effect. Of the 930 students engaged in Sutton Trust Summer Schools and Experience Cambridge in 2015, 331 (35.6%) applied to the University the following October. Of the 120 that have since been made offers, 39.2% are from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2. The Sutton Trust reports that around 95% of students attending its summer schools (most of whom are from state-sector schools and colleges with relatively low rates of progression to selective universities) go on to participate in higher education.³⁷ Research using random control groups further suggests that summer school attendees are more likely to apply aspirationally and successfully than peers with similar characteristics.³⁸ Analysis of HE+ data shows that three quarters of those engaged with this initiative went on to be admitted to a Russell Group university. This demonstrates not only that Cambridge outreach works for Cambridge, but also that it contributes to the body of under-represented or disadvantaged students admitted by other universities.

³⁶ www.sciencefestival.cam.ac.uk/

³⁷ <http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/ten-year-review-sutton-trust-summer-schools>

³⁸ www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/impact-sutton-trusts-summer-schools-subsequent-higher-education-participation-report-sutton-trust/

- 3.15 We recognise, however, that more needs to be done in terms of the reach of our activity, support offered to applicants, and the systematic evaluation of the impact of our work. We intend therefore to expand our national outreach; to introduce a long-term, collaborative and progressive outreach programme focussed on schools within our region; to provide resources and support for students taking advanced mathematics; and to increase expenditure on WP and admissions-focussed research. See section 7 for more details.

4. Fee Limits

- 4.1 The University's intention is to charge all Home and other EU undergraduates studying for a first degree, irrespective of course, and who were admitted between 1 September 2012 and before 1 September 2017 the tuition fee³⁹ set at the amount determined by the Secretary of State as the higher rate under Part III of the Higher Education Act 2004.⁴⁰ We anticipate that the fee will be £9,000; the same rate of tuition fee will apply to UK and other EU students admitted to the PGCE.
- 4.2 The University intends to participate in the first year of the TEF and will therefore raise the fee charged to Home and EU undergraduate and PGCE students admitted from 1 September 2017 in line with the inflation-adjusted fee cap announced by the Government. We anticipate that the fee will be £9,250 in 2017-18, and that new and continuing students in future years may be subject to annual or other periodic fee increases. We are confident that it will be possible to make these proposed increases in fees in compliance with consumer law.
- 4.3 At the time of drafting this Access Agreement it is not known what impact the outcome of the recent referendum on the UK's membership of the EU will have on UK policy on higher education tuition fees, loans and bursaries. Our intention for 2017-18 is to continue to charge EU students at the UK fee rate applicable at the time, provided this continues to be permitted by UK law.
- 4.4 Those undergraduates who are undertaking an Erasmus year abroad or an overseas year of study as part of their undergraduate course will be charged a fee at the maximum we are permitted to charge. Subject to approval by the University, that is expected to be £1,350. However, the year abroad fee will also increase in future years for students admitted after 1 September 2017 in line with government guidance.
- 4.5 Any student deemed to be continuing studies that were commenced before 1 September 2012 will be subject to the fee regime applicable to pre-2012 entrants.
- 4.6 It is estimated that by 2016-17 (ie the point at which it is expected that almost all undergraduate students will have been admitted under the new system introduced in 2012) and subject to any controls operated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), approximately 10,000 undergraduate students and 400 PGCE students admitted to the University will be paying the higher rate of tuition fee. This would produce an additional fee income above the standard rate of c. £30.9 million.

5. Level of Expenditure on Access Measures

- 5.1 The collegiate University has a strong commitment to widening participation. The collegiate University therefore intends to commit to expenditure on access measures at a higher level, as suggested in guidance from OFFA (see 5.4 below).
- 5.2 Overall the collegiate University plans to expend 32% of undergraduate tuition fee income (and 10% of PGCE tuition fee income) above the standard rate on access measures. It is estimated that in 2017-18, this will amount to circa £9.5 million.

³⁹ Also known as the "University Composition Fee".

⁴⁰ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/8/contents

- 5.3 Until 2012, outreach activity was funded primarily from time-limited sources including external sponsorship, philanthropic donation, government grants and from similarly limited national initiatives, such as Gifted and Talented Excellence Hubs and Aimhigher. Since 2012 the collegiate University has allocated a proportion of additional fee income to underpin and develop outreach activity. The collegiate University has also undertaken to divert the funding that it had previously allocated to the National Scholarship Programme (which ended in 2014-15) to support outreach work. In consequence, in 2017-18 outreach funding associated with the additional fee income will amount to circa £3.2m.
- 5.4 We do not intend at this point to make any changes to the level of expenditure on bursaries for 2017-18 (approximately £6.3 million per annum by 2016-17), though the scheme remains under annual review through a sub-committee of the Undergraduate Admissions Committee. Whilst mindful of OFFA guidance on this subject, we believe that, in addition to the positive effect that our bursary scheme has on attracting applications to the University, it is right to provide financial support to students with less means to enable their full participation in the student experience. This too is an important aspect of social mobility. We have also taken full account of student feedback in the formulation of the present scheme. In January 2015 the University received 856 responses from bursary recipients (40% of the total) to a survey of attitudes towards bursary provision both generally and at the University of Cambridge. Of those students from low-income backgrounds (as defined by eligibility for Free School Meals whilst in secondary school), 20.6% said that they would not have gone to university if bursaries had been unavailable; 43.1% said that the bursary offered was a deciding or very important factor in their choice of institution; and 44.1% said that without a bursary they could not continue their studies.⁴¹ In 2016 a further survey conducted by CUSU showed that 53.5% of bursary recipients regarded the availability of financial support as either very important, or they would not have attended university without it. Every College Access Officer has called for the bursary scheme to be retained at current levels as a minimum⁴².
- 5.5 It should be noted that the level of expenditure on financial support and outreach activity outlined in this agreement is supplemented with substantial funding through other sources, which include philanthropic donations and funding agreements with government agencies and third party organisations.
- 5.6 Overall, the collegiate University will, even with the higher fee, still be meeting out of its own resources almost half the real annual cost of c.£16,800⁴³ of educating an undergraduate at Cambridge and thereby benefiting every UK and EU student at the University, regardless of background.

6. Financial Support For Students

- 6.1 The University is committed to the principle that no publicly-funded UK student should be deterred from applying to an undergraduate course at the University of Cambridge because of financial considerations, and that no such student should have to leave because of financial difficulties.
- 6.2 We are concerned that levels of debt are a clear deterrent for many students, and that the loss of the state HE maintenance grant presents a real risk to maintaining current levels of access. We believe that providing maintenance support for those from low-income households is essential in order to mitigate that risk.
- 6.3 The University plans to give all UK undergraduate students from households with an income of £25,000 or less financial support of £3,500 per year (£5,600 for mature students,⁴⁴ care leavers and estranged students) in the form of a maintenance bursary.⁴⁵ Students from households with incomes

⁴¹ Survey conducted and received by the UAC Cambridge Bursary Schemes Steering Group.

⁴² Survey conducted by CUSU in Spring 2016; results for publication later in the year

⁴³ Assessed in 2013-14.

⁴⁴ Mature students for the purposes of financial support will be defined as (a) studying for a first degree, (b) 21 or over at the start of the course and (c) resident in Cambridge all year round.

⁴⁵ Note that we will take into account any funding secured from other public sources (for example the NHS and funding made available from UK devolved administrations) when assessing eligibility and amounts to be awarded.

of between £25,000 and £42,620 will be offered support of up to £3,500 on a tapering basis.⁴⁶ Students from elsewhere in the EU will be entitled to similar support subject to proper demonstration of equivalent household income.

Figure 1: Summary of Undergraduate Financial Measures

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

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

7. Targets and Milestones

- 7.1 The University will continue to encourage applications from well-qualified applicants from groups that are currently under-represented and to admit a greater proportion of them within the framework of our admissions policy and without compromising entry standards. Experience demonstrates that outreach activity (particularly that focussed on younger age groups, as advocated in OFFA guidance) will not be reflected in the composition of the student population for some years.
- 7.2 The University recognises the value of HESA performance indicators and benchmarks, but notes that the benchmarks have severe limitations in a Cambridge context, in that they take insufficient account of the University's entrance requirements, both in terms of subject combinations and levels of attainment.⁴⁷
- 7.3 Guidance from the Office for Fair Access sets out three key areas to be addressed by Access Agreements. These are outreach, admissions and retention. Accordingly the University proposes to measure its progress against eight targets across those three areas:

Outreach

- to offer a commitment to the minimum number of places available on summer schools at the University;
- to launch a long-term, progressive and collaborative outreach project in the eastern region;
- to embed the DfE-piloted STEP Mathematics Correspondence Course within University provision.

Admissions

- to admit UK resident students from UK state-sector schools and colleges so that they fall within a range of 62-64% of the total intake, reaching the top of that range by 2019-20;

⁴⁶ We have chosen to link our provision to government support arrangements; this will be reviewed should these arrangements change significantly.

⁴⁷ www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/research/

- to admit UK resident students from quintiles 1 and 2 of the Participation Of Local Areas (POLAR3)⁴⁸ classification so that they fall within the range 10-13.0% of the total intake, reaching the top of that range by 2019-20;
- to admit UK resident students from supergroups 7 and 8 and groups 3a, 3b, 3c and 4b of the Output Area Classification so that they comprise 8.2% of the total intake by 2019-20.

Retention

- to maintain our record of retention, with the rate of non-continuation in HE following year of entry to be 2.1% or less.

7.4 In addition, we will be investing in our research function to understand better the issues underlying each of these areas and to measure our impact.

7.5 The University has selected the eight targets described above because they are measurable, do not rely on information which is unavailable (or inconsistently available) at the point of application, and are possible to influence without compromising either the principle of needs-blind admissions, or entry standards. We will nonetheless continue to consider such other data as is made available by UCAS and HESA and its usefulness in measuring our progress.

Minimum Number of Places on Summer Schools

7.6 Research has shown that summer schools are a particularly effective and measurable mechanism for improving access to higher education. The University's own data demonstrates proven success in relation to subsequent admission to Cambridge of summer school attendees over several admission cycles. The University will therefore continue to offer a minimum of 600 places per year on its programmes, making the Cambridge summer schools programme one of the largest and most ambitious in the UK.

Long-Term Outreach

7.7 Long-term engagement with schools to improve outcomes for the sector is a key strategic aim for the University, and so we propose to launch such a scheme in our region in 2016-17, in partnership with the Brilliant Club⁴⁹.

The new regional outreach initiative will focus on students from under-represented and disadvantaged students (as defined by Free School Meal eligibility, POLAR and OAC) in clusters of schools from Year 7 through to Year 11. This programme will progressively engage students from the point of transition to secondary school (which has been identified as a point at which bright students can fall into a negative trajectory⁵⁰) in areas of low social mobility (Cambridgeshire and similar rural locations being identified as some of the worst performers by the Social Mobility Index⁵¹). Depending on the rate of progress, this scheme has potential to engage hundreds of students concurrently within 5 years and to build strong lasting relationships with local schools and colleges.

7.8 We note that HEFCE has recently announced funding for National Collaborative Outreach Programmes.⁵² The University plans to make an application to the fund which, if successful, will have a bearing on the exact scope, content and timescale for delivery of the above initiative, but will lead to a richer offering for schools and colleges within the region.

STEP Correspondence Course

⁴⁸ www.hefce.ac.uk/analysis/yp/POLAR/

⁴⁹ <http://www.thebrilliantclub.org/>

⁵⁰ www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/missing-talent/

⁵¹ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496103/Social_Mobility_Index.pdf

⁵² <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name,107804,en.html>

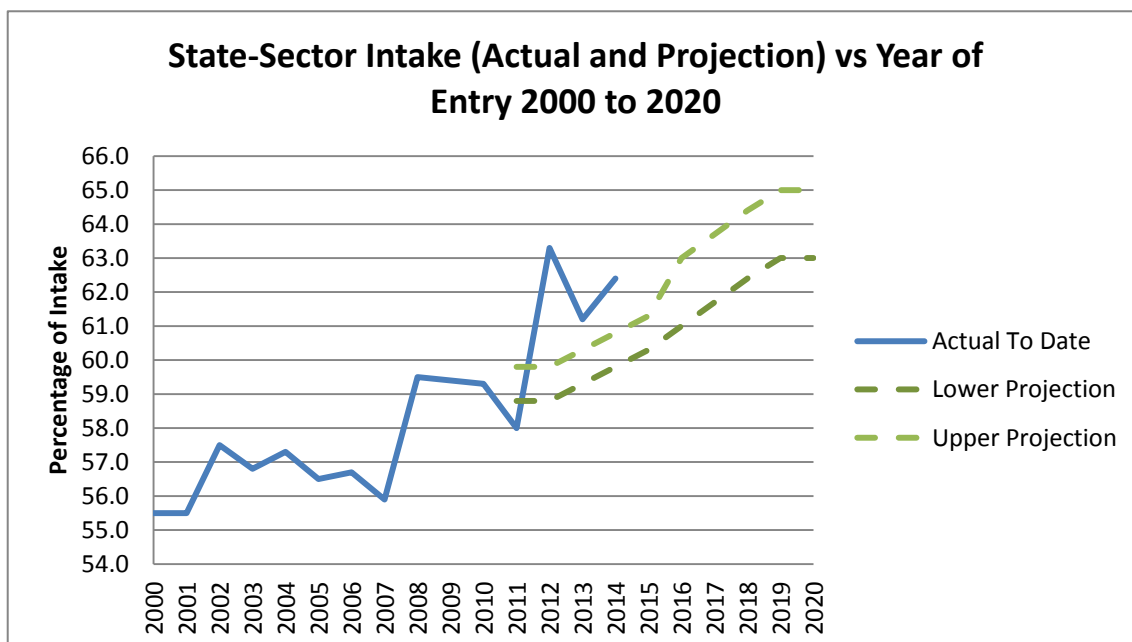
7.9 As noted at section 2.9, we are concerned about the impact of Government reforms on mathematics provision in schools. This is a particularly important issue for Cambridge, given that around three quarters of all students admitted to the University hold a post-GCSE mathematics qualification, and for many subjects it is a key requirement. We therefore propose to use additional fee income to continue a pilot STEP Mathematics Correspondence Course which was initiated by the Faculty of Mathematics using time-limited funding from the Department for Education. This programme, which introduces students to the style of mathematical argument required at selective universities, will engage over a thousand learners through online materials from the start of Year 12, and will provide up to 250 applicants to Cambridge, drawn from widening participation backgrounds, with further one-to-one support as they engage with the admissions process.

Proportion of Intake from State Schools

7.10 The collegiate University seeks to increase the proportion of our UK undergraduate intake from schools and colleges in the UK state sector.

7.11 National A-level attainment data shows that the proportion of students educated in state-sector schools at typical attainment levels (A*A*A+) required for entry to Cambridge fall somewhere in the range 61-65%,⁵³ with research conducted by the University pointing towards the lower end of that range as being a reasonable expectation for Cambridge state sector admissions when several relevant factors are taken into account.⁵⁴ At the time of writing it was not possible to use UCAS data to confirm this position as its data analysis service does not yet exclude A-level subjects which are not accepted for entry. Despite this, the University will nonetheless retain its objective for 62-64% of students admitted to be from state-sector schools and colleges, making annual progress and reaching 64% by 2019-20. However, as noted at Section 2.7 above, government policy may have a negative bearing on this objective.

7.12 The graph below shows progress since 2000 and the upper and lower projections allowing for a 1.0% fluctuation either side of the planned position.

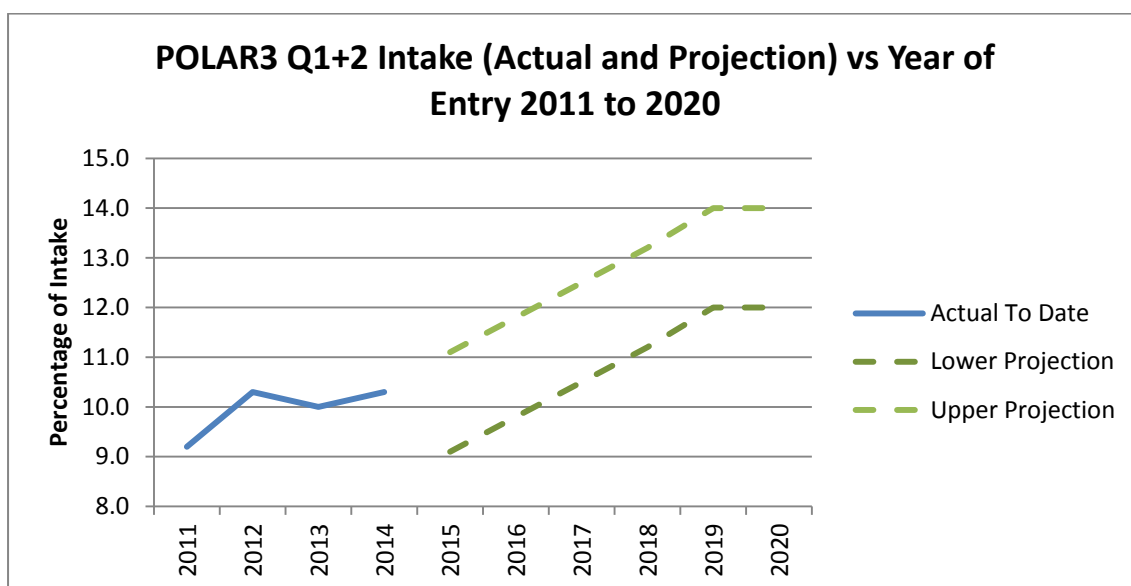


Proportion of Intake by POLAR3 Quintile

⁵³ "Candidates awarded the A* grade at A-level in 2014", T.Gill, Cambridge Assessment Statistical Report Series No.92, Table 5b.

⁵⁴ <http://www.cao.cam.ac.uk/admissions-research/achievable-target> and "Re-Evaluation of the Target for Maintained Sector Schools", Horner, 2016.

- 7.13 Currently HESA performance indicators and other national datasets relating to socio-economic background do not take adequate account of the entry requirements of individual institutions. Whilst they take some account of attainment, they do not do so in sufficient detail for highly selective institutions such as Cambridge where the average candidate admitted has 2.82 A* grades with specific subject entry requirements. We would also note that POLAR, which is a key part of the language used by HEFCE and the sector in terms of widening participation, is a measure of participation in higher education, rather than of socio-economic circumstances (though there is overlap between the two).
- 7.14 Nonetheless the University recognises the directional value of measures such as POLAR. In our Access Agreement last year we stated that our objective was for the proportion of students admitted from POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2 to fall within the range 10-13% of the total intake, reaching the top of that range by 2019-20 (aiming at the same time to maintain admissions for low participation neighbourhoods at between 3-4% in any given year). However, as proposed by the Director of Fair Access, this was reviewed during 2015-16 using UCAS data. That data shows that 12.5% of HE entrants achieving A*A*A or better at A-level were in POLAR3 quintiles 1 and 2.⁵⁵ At the request of OFFA we will maintain our objective of reaching 13.0% by 2019-20, but note that, as confirmed by discussion with UCAS in the light of the data it controls, this means admitting students disproportionately in relation to the national profile at the levels of attainment required by Cambridge.
- 7.15 The graph below shows progress since 2011 and the upper and lower projections allowing for a 1.0% fluctuation either side of the planned position.



Proportion of Intake by OAC Group

- 7.16 Output Area Classification (OAC)⁵⁶ is a geodemographic segmentation system produced by the UK Office for National Statistics. It is different to POLAR3 in that it is (in part) based on socio-economic and occupation variables, as opposed to representation in higher education, and therefore provides an alternative indicator of social mobility in higher education. Unlike commercial measures, it is an entirely transparent measure based on known variables. When coupled with POLAR3 we believe that this measure provides a more meaningful indication of progress on widening participation measures.
- 7.17 We intend to adopt a target focussing on supergroups 7 (“constrained city dwellers”) and 8 (“hard-pressed living”), and groups 3a (“ethnic family life”), 3b (“endeavouring ethnic mix”), 3c (“ethnic

⁵⁵ www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/app_level_report_2015-dr2_042_05.pdf

⁵⁶ www.opengeodemographics.com/

dynamics”) and 4b (“challenged Asian terraces”), because our research and analysis has found that these OAC groups are especially associated with one or more indicators of disadvantage, including under-representation in the Cambridge applicant population; low household incomes (using Cambridge Bursary Scheme data for admitted applicants); and/or a relatively low proportion of heads of household being in professional or managerial occupational classifications (using UCAS data for Cambridge applicants).⁵⁷ We aim to increase our admissions of students from areas classified into these OAC groups so that they fall in the range 7.5-8.2% (from a baseline position of 7.3% for 2015 entry), reaching the top of that range by 2019-20.

Retention

- 7.18 The extensive support offered by the Cambridge collegiate system ensures that the University has one of the best rates of student retention in the sector (currently 98.8%⁵⁸). Nonetheless, increased levels of fee debt present significant challenges to retention that are difficult to predict. A continuing objective will therefore be to ensure that the University maintains its position in relation to the HESA benchmark on non-continuation of full-time degree entrants in higher education following year of entry. Taking an average of the five years from 2008-09 to 2012-13 as a baseline, that figure is 2.1%.⁵⁹

Research

- 7.19 The success of all of our work depends upon deep understanding of the issues affecting under-represented and disadvantaged groups in the context of admission to highly selective institutions, effective targeting of at-risk groups, the delivery of high-quality learning opportunities, and the measurement of outputs and impact in terms of being admitted to and succeeding at leading universities.

- 7.20 We have already begun this work, but will in 2016-17 establish a strengthened research team with a specific remit for contributing to the sector’s understanding of these issues, building evaluation frameworks, and informing the strategic direction of the collegiate University’s access work. In particular we will:

- produce research to develop an understanding of different forms of disadvantage and under-representation;
- create an evaluation framework for widening participation work for the collegiate University;
- assess the impact of outreach work conducted by the collegiate University using quantitative tools such as HEAT,⁶⁰ and qualitative tools such as surveys;
- profile the national pool of potential applicants by characteristic and background using data from UCAS and the DfE (insofar as their data policies allow) to inform targeting of activity;
- measure the predictive quality and impact of admissions assessments and contextual data use on selection, and develop policy accordingly;
- monitor student success by characteristic;
- explore work on collaborative projects with admissions research groups at other universities.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements

- 8.1 The University will continue its policy of making admissions statistics publicly available, through its website. Those statistics include data on the number of applications and acceptances by school type, region, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic classification.

- 8.2 The University’s adherence to this agreement and its progress in reaching the objectives indicated above will be monitored through the University’s Undergraduate Admissions Committee (jointly

⁵⁷ “Output Area Classification 2011”, Sumnall Aug 2014.

⁵⁸ HESA performance indicators 2011-12, www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2064&Itemid=141, Table 3a.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ The Higher Education Access Tracker, <http://heat.ac.uk>

chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and the Associate Secretary of the Colleges' Senior Tutors' Committee with responsibility for admissions) which reports to the principal University and Collegiate bodies. The Committee will take advice from the Admissions Forum, the intercollegiate body charged with managing undergraduate admissions and delivering agreed targets and objectives. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee will annually review application, offer and admission trends, particularly in respect of currently under-represented groups. It will also keep under review, and advise as necessary on the amendment of, admissions and recruitment processes that have a bearing on securing a wide and diverse pool of well-qualified applicants. Each of these groups includes student representation.

- 8.3 The Cambridge Bursary Scheme and other financial support will be reviewed by the Undergraduate Admissions Committee through a specially tasked Cambridge Bursary Scheme Sub Group, which will monitor the operation and impact of the scheme using annual reports and data analysis, and make recommendations as appropriate.
- 8.4 Scrutiny of outreach activities will be undertaken by the Outreach Steering Group (reporting to the Undergraduate Admissions Committee), which receives reports on those activities and reviews their effectiveness. The success of outreach activities (aside from those which are web-based or of a general aspiration-raising nature) will be monitored through annual analyses of qualitative evaluation and attendee and application data. It will not be possible to measure routinely the wider benefit to the HE sector of Cambridge activity until measures are put in place at a national level to assist with quantitative evaluation. It is our intention to embed or grow those initiatives which make demonstrable progress towards their objectives.
- 8.5 The University has identified specific groups that may be particularly affected by higher tuition fees and so has prepared an Equality Assurance Assessment in line with BIS guidance. The University will continue to consider any potential disproportionate or adverse impact on protected groups (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) periodically via the groups described above. An Equality Assurance Assessment in relation to the University's widening participation activities has been completed and approved by the University Equality Assurance Assessment Review Group to ensure that it fulfils its legal obligations in this area. It should be noted that national data regarding several protected characteristics does not exist, and so no comparisons can be made in any such assessment.
- 8.6 Post-entry reviews will be undertaken by continued analyses of retention rates and examination performances of relevant groups in comparison with those of the overall cohorts.
- 8.7 We will continue to monitor the ease with which students make the transition from school to university on a subject-by-subject basis. The University's Centre for Teaching and Learning⁶¹ working in collaboration with Faculties, Departments and Colleges, is taking the lead on this and is considering the varying ways in which technology can support first year students. The personal attention paid to the needs of students through the Colleges will continue to enable prompt resolution of any individual difficulties.

9. Provision of Information to Students

- 9.1 The University will ensure that full details of its access measures, including a detailed description of financial support arrangements, are published in future editions of our Undergraduate Prospectus, finance guides and on the web.⁶² Advice and information will continue to be given to students during school and college visits and at Higher Education fairs, conferences and open days.
- 9.2 We shall provide in a timely manner such information as the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the Student Loans Company (SLC) reasonably require to populate their applicant-facing web services.

⁶¹ www.cctl.cam.ac.uk

⁶² See www.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/finance and www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/cambridgebursary